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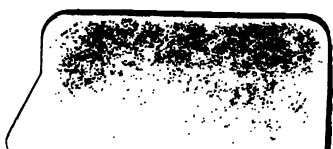
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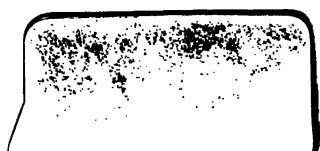








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## SPIRITUAL CULTURE.

BY REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."*—1 CORINTHIANS xii. 31.

THERE were many things among these Corinthians of which the Apostle had to complain. They were fond of what they supposed to be philosophic speculation. Theories ran into disputes—disputes into all unprofitableness and evil. They neglected to cultivate the graces and virtues of the Gospel. Though nominally Christians, they were no better than other Gentiles. They had changed their name, but not their practice. They saw the folly of the past, but not the glory of the future. They perceived something of the emptiness of the world, but very little of the fulness of God. They did not live, they only talked about living. They did not covet life, but only the signs of life.

They looked abroad upon the brotherhood and observed there a diversity of "gifts," the strange development of what appeared to them mysterious forces. These gifts endowed those who possessed them with extraordinary power and influence. These gifts had their degrees and their relative values; and some were therefore preferred. The misfortune was, too many coveted one or other of these offices. They desired not to find whereunto God had called them, so that they might do God's will in submission and humility, but their carnal ambition set them to desiring office as a means to their earthly elevation. They thought Christianity was only a new vehicle on the old road. The spirit in them was that of Simon Magus. It was simple worldliness. It was opposed to God. And there are some passages which

indicate that this spirit pervaded those who possessed the gifts as much as those who only desired them. Thus the gifts themselves were often not only neutralized, but sources of temptation and misfortune.

The Apostle has been showing them that these developments, endowments or gifts, are not strange—not antagonistic, one to another—not in reality preferable. The spirit that appoints one appoints all, and pervades all. Diversity is a necessity. One is as important and valuable as another. The body could not be the human body if it were all head, or all foot, or all eye, or all ear. All its members are co-equal and mutually dependent. With any one part wanting, the body would be imperfect—every other part would suffer. By means of the diversity there is completeness. There is a question of deeper interest than that of being a member: the question as to the health of the member the spirit, that animates it, its usefulness, in its place according to its degree. Nothing existed for itself. The value of any one part was its service to the whole—that which was retired and obscure, if in its place, as important as that which was seen, and prominent.

This idea is one which is prevalent in Paul's Epistles. The spirit of that old world was a spirit of worldliness—the idea of form, not of essence. Law, spirit, life, was really unknown in any general degree, till Christ made it incarnate. It was the one thing supremely difficult to impress upon the heathen mind. It is still the thing supremely difficult to impress upon the human mind. To give life is to find it. To humble oneself is to be exalted. It is hard to make that believed. Yet it is an idea fundamental to a wise conception of the Gospel, of the work the Gospel has to do. Whatever God's plans for man—for the future—might be, he will work only as he works by means, however slow they might be. If Christ is to effect salvation for a race, he will not enthrone himself upon a star and come to us on a cataract of glory. He will come to Bethlehem, to mortal infancy, to human vicissitude, to earthly providences. He will trust to the slow years to work in nature's channels, to make known his person and his mission. He will thread the track of mortal footsteps,

and manifest God in the maze of common vicissitude. If the kingdom of grace is to be a fact upon earth, it is to be—not by arbitrary action in God, not by mere wishing in man, but by slow development in the race itself. If God's kingdom is to be set up here, it is to be only as God's will is done upon earth as it is in heaven. It is a kingdom to be built—to grow. All expectations of it otherwise than as it is in us are visionary and void. Whatever the raptures of the prophets proclaim, are but results—facts standing in ultimate completion, viewed in the distance. But there is a road to them, long and meandering as to all things else. The manifestation of Christ to this world is to be a manifestation of all that was in Christ pervading human action, because it is enthroned in the human heart. Your heart and mine filled with Christian greatness, overflowing in Christian work, broad and deep in Christian life, is the proclamation of Christ. Without it, my pulpit is vain, your gifts are useless.

This would appear to be the very conception itself our church would convey to us in this season of the Epiphany—the conception of what a true manifestation of Christ is to be. If you examine, you will find she selects as a special Scripture for our instruction, the 12th chapter of Romans, one of the most practical contained in the Bible; all of it hanging upon this idea of grace and virtue, by means of the exercise of the gifts and opportunities providence bestows. “Present your bodies a living sacrifice.” Salvation is for time and earth as well as for heaven and eternity. “Ye are members one of another.” The grace of one is somewhat limited by that of another, and the glory of Christ is delayed if his image is wanting to the church. Each has a ministry. Paul is addressing the people, not the clergy. There were no clergy, in one sense of the word. Whatever it be, let each wait upon his ministering. There cannot be one soul too many, unless that soul be off the track where God put it. The providence which directs the universe, directs this world—the human race and the church. There cannot be one tree too many in a forest—one leaf too many on the tree. There cannot be one man too many in this race, nor one Christian who has not his



special and peculiar mission or gift. Every man by virtue of his antecedents—the accidents of birth and education, the experiences and contingencies of life—is utterly different from every other man. God meant he should be. No two faces are alike, because no two beings are alike. Individuality is as much a fact as if there were but one being in the universe. Mark the analysis here. The faces which create individuality are the most of them beyond the control of the individual. No man can make himself another man, no man can do another man's work, nor occupy another man's mission. He may get out of himself into another man's way, that is all. That which constitutes wisdom in any man—that which is the basis of merit for you or me, is the knowledge we have of our mission, and the fidelity with which we execute that. Herein lies the gist of moral being. Herein is the essence of your well-being and mine. He who has the truest conception of his mission, and is most faithful in its execution, is most serviceable to his fellow-men, and therefore most conducive to the glory of God. Neither the Bible nor reason can suggest to us any way in which man can glorify God, except as he affects some true well-being in himself and in his fellow-men.

There is, then, that class of gifts, or that degree, which cometh of what we call nature, cometh of providence—*i.e.*, of God. The fact is patent. There is natural disposition, temperament, taste, or preference. There is more or less reasoning, more or less perception, more or less skill. Then there are advantages or disadvantages of education, training, culture. Some are shielded and modelled within the sacred circle of home; some are flung upon the world to get right or wrong side up as best they may. By all these means each comes at last to be himself.

This, however, does not touch what Paul means by the "gifts" we are to covet. You perceive no amount of coveting here could do much good. Any man may improve any faculty he possesses by culture and discipline, but no man can materially change his organic nature. You cannot put brains into that head which has already all it will hold, nor skill into that hand

which knows no device. This shows us what Paul endeavours to show the Romans, that the potter has power over the clay. He knows what he wants. He does not and will not, as some have imagined, make vessels just to break or destroy them. All the universe is his household, and he makes all vessels unto honour, because for his service, though one may be to be seen, and another to be obscure, and, in that sense only, one to honour and another to dishonour. The gifts we are to covet are the accessories to life: the positions and powers best adapted to, naturally growing out of, our organic structure; the office for which our natural faculty, under proper cultivation, best fits us, whether it be in the artificial orders which man has created, or something new and peculiar. There is such a thing in life as vocation; that vocation has an object or aim beyond itself. There may be men who work without ambition, for the simple love of work, because somebody started them as part of a machine, and they must now, from force of habit, keep on. But generally men have a purpose. Under that purpose a motive. Men ought to have a vocation, but what for? Men ought to have a purpose, but what kind? There you begin to see the "more excellent way." Here you strike the very essence of life itself. Here you touch the cause of the few successes and of the manifold failures in human life. If you look at this social fabric a little, you will see that wealth is a power; that eloquence is a power; that skill in anything is a power; that all these conduce to what we call position; that then this position itself is a power. All these powers constitute what Paul calls "gifts"—over and above nature's bestowment, and yet thereon dependent. They are weapons of offence or defence. They are instruments of weal or woe. Paul says, "earnestly covet them;" in other words, set your heart upon them—in other words still, have an ambition after them. Now, possibly to many of us this sounds strange, because we have been taught that ambition is somehow a wrong thing to have, which is all very true, if you mean the common ambition of common men. But search the records of time,

and where will you find a more ambitious man than Paul himself, or where will you find a nobler character? It is not the ambition which is wrong, but it is the motive which inspires the ambition. When the motive is low and sordid, for mere petty selfish ends—to win a few flattering words from man, the admiration of a gaping crowd, the acquisition of that which panders to lust—the ambition is sensual and devilish. It degrades. The gifts, whatever they be, are curses rather than blessings, the greater curse in proportion as they are greater gifts. They make the man a moral pestilence—a maelstrom sweeping down into death. Nor does it matter what the gift is if it panders only to vanity and folly, if its exercise be in unwisdom and self. It may stand here in the pulpit; it may move in grace on the very crest of the social wave. All the good in it will be accidental. God has placed in us a sentiment which urges us to excel. It is part of the warp and woof of being, and one of the most beautiful threads which compose the fabric. We have no word for the proper exercise of the sentiment short of wisdom—no word for the perversion of it short of selfishness. In wisdom man is glorified. Let him seek the loftiest flights. In selfishness man is cursed, and in it a throne is but a moral ditch. Herein lies much of human sin. We look upon these secondary gifts, these powers of wealth or position or office, without consulting the primary—the basis God has laid. Some men are trying to get rich who can never do any more than demonstrate that riches for some men are impossible. Give them a fortune to-night, and they would give half of it away before they slept, and lose the other half the first thing in the morning. Some men are trying to be orators across whose souls the spirit of oratory never swept. Some people are aiming at social position who can never do any more than make society ridiculous. Some men are striving for political office, for surgical skill, for scientific distinction, who can never do anything more than block the wheels of progress, and make wise men grieve. The world must carry them, and *a sad burden they are to the world.* All want to be in the

first place, and so we jostle each other with our mistaken vocations. None of us know where our first place is. Few want to be themselves. Few want to be where God wants them to be. And so our high places are constantly tumbling down, and our low places are low indeed, because nobody is there to lift them up and make them a blessing. I think it might be shown that what we call "the professions" are very much of a snare, and the time will come in which, if they are not removed, our estimate of them will be very much reversed. The best profession for any man is that which he can best do, only he should do it without profession.

And here we Christians have made a mistake. We have not set before our sons and daughters objects proper for the exercise of their ambition. We have had no such objects, possibly, ourselves. We do not believe that pride is of the devil: that meekness, mercy, and purity of heart are of the better life. I know not where we shall go to find that humility is a virtue. We have not asked what we are good for—what service to our fellow-men we can best render—but how distinguished we may be, how comfortable we may make ourselves, how respectably we may live. To be obscure is worse than to be dead. We do not ask what endowments our children possess, what they can do for the real comfort and elevation of their race, but how they are to get on in life. We do not view life as a thing we are to make, but as a thing that is to make us. The church, the army, the bar, the office, squeeze in wherever bread and the signs of life can most easily be gotten. Humiliating are the rivalries, even in things called sacred—disgusting even to worldliness itself. Sometimes, just where ambition is most denounced, we find it in its most paltry and sickening forms. Sad is the perversion of talent, therefore frightful is the price of bread. Nobody wants to work. Nobody wants to be of any service. God made us individuals, and we are working with all our might to destroy our individuality. Even in church membership we have nothing to do but to live like other people, and dress like other people, and talk like other people. At the

baptismal font I renounce the pomps and vanities of the world. At the sacred supper I kneel in the flimsiest toggery a pompous and vanity-stricken world can provide. Men are discussing questions "how to reach the masses," "how to convert the world." A far more imperative question is, "how to reach the church—how to convert Christians?" The prime want of our world to-day is Christian ambition: ambition to renounce the world; ambition to be industrious; to do God's work with our hands, if we have no heads; with our heads if we have them; but with our hearts, have what we may. One of the saddest facts written upon our society is the wretched perversion and prostitution of natural and acquired gifts. Society is rotting, because the salt that God provided has lost its savour. God wants us to be different, so he made us different, and a church full of real individuals would be a glorious sight, an invincible force. A fearful evil has grown up imperceptibly, unconsciously among us. Religion has been made to consist in emotion—in certain experiences—which may depend upon any one of manifold contingencies—temperament, food, society, seclusion, excitement. We have ignored reason, and practice, and real well-being here upon earth. In consequence, we wake and perceive the multitudes are not in the church—and worse than that, they are in poverty, in vice, in ignorance, and crime. We form societies to reclaim them, when the one great society wanted is one to reclaim us. We manufacture more offices and send missionaries, when the great want is that we be missionaries ourselves in the offices whereunto God sent us. It is well enough to think of dying, and we talk a great deal about it, but it is time for some of us to think of living, and to begin to live. Think of the millions that die, but of the few that are missed. Most of us, in our exit from earth, perform our highest service. We place somebody under obligations, for we make room for another. There can be no reformation in the world till there is reformation in the church. There can be no work accomplished for God, except as we to whom God has given faculties for the work, use the faculties in the work for which they were given.

All exertion outside of this is beating the air. The world, the church, this race, wants to-day, not office, not money, not societies, half so much as it wants Christian character—personal Christian influence in our homes, at our altars, in our streets, where there are few eyes to see it, and where for that reason it can be most effective. Talk of three orders of the ministry—what can three orders do where twelve hundred million are wanted? We could get along very well without these “gifts,” if we had what is better than all gifts, the spirit of unself, the love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom that is from above, the essence of pure grace—in short, if we were true Christians, if we were saved ourselves. When we have that, there will be an epiphany—not before. All our epiphanies will be limited to the proportion we have of this. Who hath it hath the Son of God and hath life. Who hath it not hath not the Son of God, and hath not life; nor can he impart any life in this world or any other world.

Do you catch no perception now of the meaning of the Apostle, “covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” There are nature’s endowments, then there are positions and vocations and their powers—one or other of which we ought to have—but above all, and better than all, there is *character*.

It is a matter of no consequence to you in what circle of life you move, what church you belong to, how much money you have, how much you are in need of, what office you fill; but the matter of infinite concern to you is, what are you in office, in church, in society? What are you with your gifts, natural or acquired? That is the problem that every day asks you to solve. Now it may seem strange, but, with all our attempts to escape it, this is the one thing we are for ever telling, what we are. Here is the great paradox of life. No man can tell his experiences to another; your knowledge, your wisdom, you cannot give even to your son; and yet that is the one thing you are for ever expressing. Every man who hath an eye to see *reads us through and through*.

We can never cheat anybody at last but ourselves. Through our words, through our actions, through our clothes, people see our souls—or see that we have no souls. The giddy girl, the dandy boy, the pompous man, the silly woman, are to all but themselves a walking folly. Be what we will, we but express ourselves at last. Your very face is a catalogue of your thoughts, motives, habits, antecedents. Any true man can read it. It ought to be one we should delight to have God to read. Then it would glorify him. But whatever ~~it~~ is, character is the one thing that will not be hid. It is the one power that survives all power. If we are like everybody else we are nothing, and the world knows it. If we are weak and foolish we catch at the froth of life, and the world sees it. This is character—to have a power within. This is noble character—to have a wise power within. One reason why we run so much in crowds is, we have nothing in us. Half of us cannot entertain ourselves, and the world has to do its best to provide new follies for us. We spend our time abroad because we are afraid to be by ourselves at home. Vice and folly proceed from our incapacity for anything else. Christian wisdom loves soul-communion, rejoices in the truth. The pure soul feeds on principle, on law, rejoices in essences—never shrinking at little events or accidents—seeing the grand results—when the sparks and scales produced by the hammering of providence have died into dross. Strength inquires into and discovers where it is weak. The wise soul is a tower of strength to its race, to its times. By them this world is kept together; in them every artery of being pours its life-tide through this human mass. The impure soul sees nothing but the sparks and scales, the worthless dross. It has no great purpose; it needs props and bolsters; it requires sweet and soothing cordials; it quakes in the presence of truth. Weakness must hide its weakness, and delve for ever in itself after any possible atom of strength. Such souls are this world's burden. To carry them galls our neck, keeps us lean and bony and evermore craving rest and life. We want no more of them. We ask to get rid of what we have.

This was what Christ ~~came~~ into this world for—to destroy folly and evil, to make us sons of God, to take us out of that which is negative and selfish into that which is positive, which is noble, which is wise. Every voice of the here or the hereafter appeals to us through every avenue of life. Now, a thought occurred to some of you just now, and it is worth thinking about.

If the endowments of nature and the contingencies of life determine the gifts we ought to acquire, do they not, at the same time, account for the depravity we sometimes behold, and the vices and wrongs some men practise, perchance for our own delinquencies? Unquestionably they do; and this fact opens to you many thoughts; it shows us why it is. God, throughout the Bible, does not look upon us so much faulty as unfortunate. Recal the merciful accents of God's paternal love: "I would not the death of a sinner, only that he should turn away from his sin and be saved." "Cease to do evil—learn to do well." Read the parable of the prodigal son. Come back, that is all, and there is the whole range of a father's love. If there are accents in the Bible other than these, they are to those who hide the truth, who repel the spirit, who are taught better—not the Publicans, but the Pharisees. If there are voices that call upon you for any action, it is not because God is going to curse you by and by, but because you need now to escape death and enter into life. It is not what any of us have which is condemnation, so much as not having what we ought to have. It shows us another thing—that wisdom is not a spontaneous thing, not that which comes of nature, but that which is peculiarly our own, which makes merit in a spirit—something that you can do and I can do, that you can be and I can be. It opens for you the whole way to your work, and to the determination of what you are. We are not to wait till men and women have grown into confirmed vices or ignorance. That result is almost inevitable from the wrongs which greet us in this world, from the channels that are dug by human sin. God says to you and me, Go, in love to me; go, in renunciation of



self; go, in the spirit of Christ, and stand at the door of life. Jesus Christ says to you and me that blessed word, "Suffer the little children to come." Begin there. What do the children of this world want? The bread that perishes—a little of that; but, more than all, the bread that endureth to life eternal. They have minds; they have hearts. Mind and heart are the jewels of God. It asks in you a wide and useful knowledge—a deportment in life like the Master's—which shall be down within the reach of the lowliest. It asks that we help to make it easier to live. You see looming up through these thoughts schools, asylums, homes for the friendless, books; you see simplicity, humility, kindly intercourse; you see your own feet threading the byways of life, and your hands toiling in human service; you see your sons and daughters trained to virtue, to work, to reality. In short, this providence explains itself. You cannot want an opportunity. Whatever your gift, providence will not let it rest. If you have money, the worst possible thing for you would be to let you keep it. If you have power, the worst possible thing for you would be to let it act without a check. If you have knowledge, your poor relations and the little beggar girl in the street ask you to impart it. If you have a heart full of sympathy, the aged, the orphan, the mute, send up voices that you must heed. Misfortune even, as all things else upon earth, hath its mission. If the wise minister to all things, all things at last minister to the wise. God is justified of all his works. I know not whether we shall not at last stand indebted more to the unfortunate than the unfortunate to us. The one unfortunate thing to us is, that everybody's work seems better than ours. Only the fool is satisfied with himself. A mystery and beauty attach to all lives but ours. This also is good. God would have us reach the essence of being, and do our work because it is his will.

Beloved—young or old—sons and daughters of Zion, at the threshold of a new year, at this epiphany season, let me urge upon you the deeper realization of life, what it is, what it is for. ~~The~~ **The** ancients had a fable:—A Sphinx sat by the road side, and

asked questions of every traveller; if he could not answer he was instantly swallowed. That Sphinx is life. It propounds to you problems which you must solve or be consumed. You need to think. Whatever God may have done for others, he has been infinite in goodness to us. We ought to seek the highest gifts. We ought to do it in the spirit of Jesus. He is our model. He gave himself; let us give ourselves. Therein is wisdom, therein is glory—to be oneself, that oneself wise. Life so pursued, though it seem to us an infancy, and be clothed in swaddling bands, will grow into consistency and unity as time advances; will stand at last invested in a beauty and power without rent or seam, woven throughout. This is the “more excellent way,” the way to the truth and the life everlasting.

## WISDOM.

By REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*"A wise man will hear, and will increase learning ; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels : to understand a proverb, and the interpretation ; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings."—PROVERBS i. 5, 6*

THIS first chapter of the Proverbs of Solomon introduces us to the subject of wisdom. Wisdom, in itself, is a subject to most men peculiarly dry and insipid. I hardly know how to make it in any degree juicy and nutritive.

It is worthy of observation that this Book upon wisdom was written by a king. Kings and wisdom have seldom had much to do with each other. The wise have generally been men who dwelt in obscurity—men near to nature. But Solomon was only two removes from the people. The blood that was in him was plebeian, and so it was nature at last true to herself. Since Solomon is emphatically called the wise, the significance of the fact that he was king may be found in the truth that wisdom alone is always royal. Or, since Solomon belonged to a system that was eminently typical, the meaning of the fact that he was a king may lie in the fact that he was only a type of another son of David, who was greater than Solomon, the Wonderful Counsellor, the King of kings, the Light of the world.

What is wisdom? Unhappily for us, it is easier to tell what it is *not*, than to tell what it *is*. Most men imagine it is something that can be made, something depending upon human opinion, having its roots in contingency and expediency. Solomon suggests

at once that this is not it. "A wise man will hear and will increase learning." Hear what, and learn what? "A man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels." Wisdom is something beyond us, to be learned—to reach up to—something fixed. Wisdom in us is a perception by us of that something, a harmony of our actions with it. God hath made all things, and given to every thing its laws. In all his laws there is a fitness, an adaptation of one to the other. There is no patchwork; everything is rooted in every other thing. All laws are mutually helpful. The whole universe is a unit. That unity and helpfulness is wisdom. Solomon, making wisdom speak for herself, says, "I was set up from everlasting. When there were no depths, I was brought forth. Before the mountains were settled, I was born. When he prepared the heavens, I was there. When he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth. My delights were with the sons of men." This was God's special object in all things—the glory of his intelligent creatures. All the glory there is for us is to know his works—through them we know him. "Now, therefore, hearken unto me, O ye children: for blessed are they that keep my ways." Not to know them is to be unblest. Wisdom is the one eternal thing without which nothing can be good, and nothing good eternal. To learn this nature of things, to understand this plan of God, to work in harmony with it, is to be wise. Man is wise in proportion as he partakes of this wisdom. Not to know it, to substitute anything else for it, to thwart it, is to be run over, crushed by it. That it is—to be lost! Wisdom also ordered this. Moral intelligence is, that it can choose which to do. The glory of moral intelligence is, to see wisdom and to choose to accept it; or I might say to see it, for to see it is to accept it. Because these laws of God pervade all things, and because in our economy things seem to run in streaks or departments, there are different kinds of wise men. One farmer is wiser than another. He observes not only the laws of nature and the laws of industry, but also the laws of demand and supply. He knows where and

when to sow, where and when to work, what to sow, so as, from time and labour and crop, to gain the largest profits. One merchant is far wiser than another, inasmuch as he penetrates that which is merely accidental in trade, and perceives the great principles that sustain and govern it. Sometimes a man will see but one law, and by following that carefully will attain success. Sometimes, merely to save will make a man rich; sometimes mere hard work and much work. But mere saving and mere work are rarely to any great degree successful, because there are so many, and far more powerful, laws. Many things tend to neutralize industry and economy. The broader a man's view—the more comprehensive his grasp of law, of tendency, of society—so much the more sure of success. A man with such a grasp sometimes lays aside saving and industry, buys a piece of ground, lies down and sleeps, and in a year wakes up rich. He knew society would soon need his piece of land. This is wisdom of its kind, in its degree. It is no higher order of wisdom. It hardly touches the manhood; but being obedience to law, it is, after its kind, wisdom. It accounts for much of the strange inequality we perceive in life. Men sometimes think it strange riches should be so unevenly distributed, but there is nothing strange about it. It is natural and inevitable. If you should divide evenly, to-day, all the money upon earth, before to-morrow morning some of us would have double, and some of us would have nothing. And yet this wisdom is so low as to be scarcely wisdom at all. In all trades we expect to get a fair bargain, but a man may give far too much for his money. He may barter himself, his mind, his soul—he may give health and culture and life—for a bag full of earth. He is not wise. There are scales of wisdom.

And so all the way up. One painter is wiser than another. What is skill? What is genius? There are laws—or, at any rate, shades of laws, attachments and combinations of laws—which cannot be written down in a book, which cannot be expressed in words, but which can be perceived and expressed in art. The Michael Angelos and Christopher Wrens need no

books. They make books. Blind men imitate them. They imitate nature. They would make a higher success if the helplessness of the race did not set limits to their powers of execution. But it is as you go up you catch a glimpse of the illimitableness of man; that while his being is all one structure, it is a house of many floors. The skill in the fine arts, the perception of laws of proportion, adaptability and beauty, is a higher perception than that of merely getting bread. It brings into play diviner energies. So one legislator is wiser than another. And he who can penetrate the laws which govern society, and make a better copy of those laws for the governance of his fellow-men, is a wiser man than he who builds a temple. The true law-giver is a temple builder. He builds the great temple of human well-being: that which brings peace to hearts, and makes all men so much nearer God. So beyond him, he who sees the law of soul, the essence of mind, the law of that law which governs all things at last; he who penetrates to the throne-room of our being, and stands before the majesty of reason, of will, of affection, of design—who unlocks the secrets of beauty and perfection—he is wiser than any—than all. He is a law-giver by whom law-givers live. From him comes the temple of order, of morality, of love, of happiness, of all success. He may not have food to eat, or raiment to wear, but he dwells with wisdom, and wisdom is God. It is only when you get here that you get to that which is pre-eminently wisdom—that without which all the rest is mere skull and skin—mere horse without a rider—house without tenant. And so this wisdom of Solomon has a very wide range, from the very lowest nearly up to the supremely highest. Still there is one range it touches not, as we may presently see.

It might be thought, this may be all very true; but, because things do go by laws, it is impossible for all men to be pre-eminent in everything, or perhaps in anything. It would not be possible for every merchant to be an Astor, for every farmer to be a Longworth, or every artist an Angelo. Nature bestows *the gifts which make the men*. Most certainly so. Nor would

it be desirable that all men should be equally, or at any rate identically, gifted. But while it is true nature endows in what might be called this extraordinary way, yet it is equally true nature does everywhere endow, does every man endow. All men are not Newtons, but every man has some mathematical sense. The most ignorant and uncultured slave knows how to count his fingers. The laws of mathematics find in him a responsiveness to those laws, and when Newton has found out that ten tens makes one hundred, the man who has been ignorant may be made to see the fact. Every man cannot be a Christopher Wren, but all men can have, and do have, some idea of a shelter. For everything in the universe God has placed in man a chord which will vibrate when that something touches it. Man and nature are correlatives. They supplement each other. The natural gift is in every man in some degree. Even when it exists in the highest degree, it is still the subject of exercise, of development; and the lowest degree may be, and ought to be, cultivated. But for this, man could never progress. Cultivation is the elixir of progress. This is the very essence of providence. God provides teachers. To the people that study nature, God gives more teachers. Nature follows her laws even there. Ireland is not New England. We have as much talent for music as the Germans, but the Germans are a much more musical people. The reason why is very plain. "The wise man will hear, and will increase learning."

You must see to what this brings us—to the very point from which we can see what wisdom is—culture. What a folly it would be in me to criticise the works of Titian! What a folly in you to condemn the ethics of Plato! Suppose you wished a child to learn the Calculus, would you allow him to say the first proposition in Euclid was untrue, or to take some other course of study which had nothing to do with mathematics, because his way was pleasant, and the study of mathematics may be a little hard? So, if you wish to reach heaven, you

must not think you know the road yourself, nor think you can get there just as well by spending all your time upon something else, because you happen to like it. "A wise man will hear, and will increase learning"—not his conjectures—but find out what is—what God has done. Here we reach a secret to a secret. When we start right, when we are upon the track of nature, one thing proves another. Things prove themselves. The effects justify the cause. This is why Solomon could say, "A man of understanding shall attain"—it was no mere conjecture of his—shall attain unto wise counsels—to understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and dark sayings. We get from nature in exact proportion to what we carry to her. If you give a child a problem in multiplication, and that child sets down the figures according to conjecture, the product will not prove by any law; but if it follows law the product will be right, apply to it what test you will. If that child goes on in those laws—because they are illimitable—it may open to us worlds, tear down mountains, fill up valleys, cause us to glide along on our journeys more rapidly than birds upon their wings, fill our homes with rich knowledge, and our world with light. Upon the track of law the engine of mind speeds with trains of blessing. Two inches off the track all is one dead mass. It but beats itself out in useless exertion, its power the more fatal in proportion to its degree. Hence the absence of the knowledge of the law, like the want of a track, accounts for all the perversions and wrongs we see. In ignorance the Indian can believe and enjoy revenge—not that it is nature, except so far as it is perverted nature. He calls it enjoyment. In perversion, superstition can make an inquisition, or take a piece of bread for a piece of Christ's actual body. But, even in error, the moral sense is not wholly dead. The Indian has some idea of justice. "There is honour among thieves." Besides, we cannot argue from perversions and exceptions. You cannot say there is no light, or that it has no laws, because sometimes it is dark. All the blind people in the



world cannot destroy the fact that the human race has eyes, or that God made those eyes to see the light, which existed before the eyes. As we know not the possibilities of law, so we know not the possibilities of no law. The engine must be on the track.

This opens the whole idea of authority. Where or what is the track? God feeds his children in proportion as they can digest the food. He is his own light-bearer in proportion as our eyes can bear the light. God, to us, is what we see of God. He who sees most is the best revealer. Truth—the law of the thing, whatever it be—that is the object. Whoever sees that, or can give that, he is the authority. In our civil affairs, for society, government is the main thing. Authority is not in a line of kings. Men are not made for kings; kings are made for men. If any one line could see true government for ever, it would govern for ever. When it ceases to govern as God knows government, its work is done. It remains only to bury it. The thing signified is never in the sign. So in science. You cannot hand a power down in a guild or a fraternity. Shakespeare did not lay his hands upon anybody, and even if he had, the world would still have been without his successor; and though his plays were written for a theatre, you would not allow the best actor in the world to measure to you your appreciation for poetry. Herschel goes out and lies all night studying the stars. The stars tell him how they live, and he tells us. He is authority. The authorities are always starting up from nature; ears hear her, eyes see her, she whispers and reveals. They to whom she speaks are authority. Time and event prove their predictions. Do you see how all truth of every sort is revelation? So, in the church, all the apostolic hands could not give spiritual vision, and without that no man can be authority. Thomas a Kempis is better authority than Gregory VII., Bunyan and Baxter are worth more than all the councils that ever met to make canons. The lights of God come fresh from him. Luther hears, and for that reason he is authority. He speaks, and that part of Europe which hears him bounds into new life. England is

better than Italy. A Papal benediction and a Papal malediction are exactly the same thing—nothing at all. All truth is one, and all error is one—the slide is easy from Rome to Constantinople. And so, whether in Pagan, Papal, or Protestant lands, whatever is contrary to God's law is superstition, immorality, ignorance, vice, crime, and great woe. Wisdom is knowledge of and conformity to God's laws. Unwisdom is ignorance and non-conformity. Let the facts of history illustrate and prove the deductions of reason. Let not your prejudices or your education come in and cause you to lose this thought. All error, infidelity, atheism, are but degrees of inability to see. Not that they necessarily see who pretend to see. For judgment is Christ come, that they who see not might see, and that they who see might be made blind. Just as when Newton came, multitudes who knew nothing were enlightened, and they who had been the world's teachers in astronomy were proved to have been blind.

This opens the queries about revealed and natural religion. People talk about them as if they were two different things—talk of natural religion as if there were an unnatural religion—as if God in Christ had done something contrary to his law—something outside and above his law—and by dwelling upon it, and claiming churchly authority and vain and foolish powers, have made real and true religion appear to many extremely unnatural. Here, in this same Bible, we have the two combined. Solomon tells us of wisdom, and speaks not one word of Christ; and it is a wonder he has not been thrown out of the canon of Scripture. The truly wise—they who are admitted to the mysteries of the higher wisdom—make a sacred fraternity, come from where they may. Job was a Gentile, but here he is bound up with Moses; and he saw some things that possibly Moses did not see. The prophet Amos did not belong to the prophetic line, but here he is side by side with Daniel and Isaiah. His soul touched some things the breath of which never stirred even the spirit of Solomon. I do not understand that the glow-worm is opposed to the sun. Light is light. My

little lantern warms and cheers not a world, but it is better for me than unbroken darkness. The organ-grinder in the street is not opposed to Beethoven; he may produce only an echo, and his pipes may produce their sounds by mechanical necessity; but his music is music after its sort, and he is entertaining to children. Beethoven's soul drank at fountains where the angels drink. His music was natural to him, but it was a revelation to this world. Job and Solomon drank of the rills that flowed from the eternal fount of the All-wise. Daniel and Isaiah drank at the fountain. Jesus Christ was the fountain itself. He is wise who is honest. He is wiser who walks in high and precious thought. He is wisest who is in Christ Jesus, in love, in self-sacrifice and true service. Any virtue is a part of God. Who sees most of virtue sees most of God. Solomon saw the hem of his garment. Isaiah saw him. Christ Jesus was the fulness of the Godhead incarnate. Morality is a shadow; philosophy is a likeness; religion is a quickened, acting, conscious organism. He who is in morality, sleeps. He who is in philosophy, dreams. He who is in Christ Jesus is wide awake, clothed and in his right mind. Morality is in religion as ten is in one hundred, but religion is not in morality, as one hundred is not in ten. Morality and philosophy were in Christ, but atonement and remission of sin, and union of man with God, are not in morality and philosophy. Atonement and remission of sin, and self-sacrifice, were here before Christ came; but philosophy never found them. The prophets saw them, and saw the need of somebody to tell us of them; the longing heart of man felt the need of sacrifice, and longed for him who was to come. Moses and the prophets did not reveal them, but only revealed him who should reveal them. Christ was the only revealer of true religion, of the causes whence all good cometh, of the love of God, of God himself. In him centre all the laws which constitute wisdom, and on which the universe is built. In your lantern blaze, only they who stand around it see the light; but the sun shines upon the tallest tree and the humblest blade, upon the atom of sand and the measureless mountain.

The philosopher is for the few, but Christ Jesus reaches the humblest and the highest. There is no antagonism between a Christian and a moral man, only the higher always longs to bless and lift the lower, even as God longs to lift and bless a world. Morality, like all weakness, thinks it is something: religion, like true wisdom, knows that, as compared with God, it is nothing. Religion embraces philosophy and morality; hence you find them both in Christ; hence both are insisted on in a Christian life; hence he who hath not these hath not seen Christ. How lame and lost, therefore, is that church or Christian whose life is not even up to the claims of natural religion! If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness! Better a man should have natural religion than nothing; but better he should have Christ, for then he hath all. Morality and philosophy are on the road to religion, but religion without morality and philosophy is a misnomer. It is only the beginning of the outer darkness.

Here, then, you see you have an authority set up: "the wise and their dark sayings"—dark to those who do not know how to see them—Jesus Christ above them all, most reliable of all, but darkest of all to those who have "no ear to hear." It has long been said "Wisdom dwelleth in a well." The deepest of all wells is that in which the wisdom of Jesus Christ resides. The query arises—we have the sayings of the wise; we have the sayings of Christ written plainly out, to which we can all go; many go there; all Christians pretend to go there; they pretend to be wise—do they all interpret alike? Do you see no reason why they differ? Which one are you to hear? Well, why do you wish to hear any one? There is the Word, Christ Jesus himself. There is the record, as plain for you as for the Pope. You have a reason—you ought to have; you have a moral sense—you ought to have. In them you have the trinity which constitutes the unity of authority. Suppose you have no mind; suppose you have no moral sense; ah! my brother, without them you are lost. Then you take what the church tells you. Again, which church? You cannot know

any question till you know all sides of the question. You cannot have an opinion till you know the opposite opinion. Even if you are sincere in accepting your belief, that will not make your belief right. You may be worse off because you are sincere. You must use your judgment in some degree at last, and if there is danger with our wisest thought, what must there be where there is no thought at all? If you must have an authority—as, indeed, you must—why interpose a veil between you and the authority? “Thy word is truth.” “If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God,” &c. Why employ a medium when you are a medium yourself? Besides—to use an illustration—in what sense have you seen Niagara Falls, if you have only heard a man tell what he saw?

Do you see the inevitable duty to which this whole thing points?—personal, individual culture; thought, prayer, silence; much hearing, much reading, exertion to understand, self-discipline, soul-edification. Solomon puts wisdom in the seeing; Christ puts it in the seeing and the doing. Do you see how, if heaven is ever to be heaven, there must be true vision and true action in every soul, or else we have only such another world as we have here? Do you see how this implies much striving? Do you recollect Christ said, “He that hears these sayings of mine, and doeth them, is a wise man”? He who hears not, and does not, is not a wise man. Do you remember the Spirit said to John, Nothing could enter heaven that could deceive or make a lie—that had any tendency that way? And, again, of the saved, “These are they who came up,” &c. ? And, again, “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the road,” &c. ? You believe in Christ, do you? What, without understanding him; with minds playing with bubbles; with time to throw away; with affections set upon earthly things, not yet up to high moralities; minds not attuned to high philosophies; not companions for those who walk in high thought and grand meditation? Going to heaven, and are not yet masters of the bare rudiments of a heavenly life?—a candidate for the prize, and yet not only not winning the race, but not running at all? Is

heaven so cheap? Is life a toy? Can God be bribed? Will mercy let you in, when ingratitude and folly despised what mercy sent to prepare you for admission? Oh, brethren! the man or the church which dictates to you what you shall believe is not your friend. The man or the church which tells you, without true wisdom you can enter heaven, deludes you. Christ said not so. Without the foundation of wisdom underneath, he said, your house is gone. The churches cannot make a religion. Religion is not merely joining a church. You have something to do. Papal authority, episcopacy, baptism, election, all have their reality somewhere, but that where is not where it pretends to be. You want to see the realities which the churches only dimly represent. You want to be above the priest or the actor, who only officially grinds out what has been handed down to him. Men are for ever and everywhere tending toward that which is mere body and mere sense. All the reformations that have ever been have been against that which was only sensuous. Christ and the wise are for ever protestant. They protest against man's becoming a mere toy, a mere babe, or merely animal. Every man will take the best religion of which he is capable, but no man ought to be capable of simply the lowest. No wise man ever has any quarrel against any man. But is that any reason why we should not have the highest religion possible? Because we believe every man to be sincere, is that a reason why we should believe every man to be right? If every faculty we have is capable of cultivation; if we are creatures of education, and are capable of educating our children; if we can have, and do have, influence over each other, is there not glory in making influence and education of the highest type possible? What kills the church is, that so many so-called teachers do not see the truth, nor wisdom. They but echo the echoes. They pander to the times. We are always mixing things up too much with men, with churches, with narrow causes, with temporal things; hence we are slain by our prejudices. The Athenians stumbled at Socrates; the Jews at Christ. They could not hear. True wisdom is to be above all mere accidents.

Every age ought to have a broad manhood. Other ages have longed for it. Our age demands it. But where is the catholic man? The Christian should be that man. The Christian is that man. The coming age will demand him more than ours. We want breadth and depth and strength in our families, in our schools, in our churches, in our society. We are not teaching our children to think. They see too much narrowness in us all. Shall they fill up the measure of their fathers? We need to live more widely, less exclusively, less clannishly. We need to be better observers, better readers, better listeners, and so better judges. Our one want to-day is, up and down earnestness with ourselves. Our one duty is, mental and moral culture. We have all the elements. There is Christ; there is ourselves; there is our work. The wise will hear, and will understand. They shall inherit glory.

## THE RELIGIOUS RELATIONS OF THE INTELLECT.

BY REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

*"I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts."*—

HEBREWS viii. 10.

I would call your attention to the mind, in the hope that I may assist you to realize the high rank it occupies in the Christian economy, and the obligations which its welfare imposes. By mind I mean those faculties which, in general, are defined as intellectual faculties; and which, being possessed, distinguish men as belonging to the order of intellectual beings.

That there is mind, and that it is superior to matter, I assume, and I have a right so to do; for assumption is not illogical where the demonstration of the thing assumed can be instantaneous and popular—that is, within the range of ordinary understandings. That our bodies are but the organs of our minds, and therefore inferior to them, and totally distinct from them, is seen in this: that the one can be destroyed, while the other remains intact. If our gross materialists be right, that mind and matter are essentially one; or that the one is but the effect of which the other is the cause; then would this occur: that by as much as you lessened the body, by so much would you lessen the mind. For by as much as you lessen the cause, by so much do you lessen the effect. But this mental shrinkage



does not result from bodily severance; for the surgeon can cut both legs of a man off near the trunk, and then he can cut both arms off at the shoulder, until a full half of his body as represented by bulk has been destroyed, and still the energies of the man's mind are in no way affected. The symmetry of the body is gone, but the symmetry of the undestroyed and the indestructible mind remains. The knife and the saw have not touched it; they cannot.

Now, holding that mind is immortal, I would point out to you some of its religious relations, to the end that we may all apprehend how natural to the mind itself are those states, moods, and natures which the Bible enjoins. For religion is only nature corrected—nature perfected. When man stands in his natural powers, with all his adjustments correct, with all his instincts just, and with all his aspirations holy, he has in him the same mind that was in Christ; for in him all religion existed organically. Reverence, obedience, affection, humility, truthfulness, and whatever other element piety includes, lived incarnate in him. He embodied them. Hence, imitation of him is piety in its highest phase. Hence, his life is the light of men, morally. Hence, Christian studentship is a studentship of his character.

Well, the first characteristic of the mind, religiously considered, is activity. Mind is motion, mind is impulse, mind is vibration, mind is only God's thought; and his thought keeps for ever thinking. Intellect is not pond-like; it is current-like. Intellectual life is only a prolongation of force. No element of God is stagnant. If it knows calmness of state, it is the calmness of life which can, at any moment, be thrilled from surface to deepest depths with vibrations. Mind, therefore, in its religious connections, must be for ever active. Be not afraid, therefore, to think, young men. Let your minds go forth continually in search of facts. Knock at the door of every phenomenon; press against the door until the fastenings of it yield to your pressure, and, passing in, you stand eye to eye in presence of its long-pent mystery. Wherever there is darkness,

creep into it; and when you have entered within its gloom, kindle the torch of investigation and look around you, to discover the hidden wonder. Explorations, spiritually, are for ever in order. The geography of the spirit realm must be ascertained; and he who makes actual inspection of its characteristics, and gives the knowledge thus obtained to man, adds to the total of human thought, and leaves humanity, at the close of his mortal life, his debtor. He who simply receives of human knowledge is merely benefited. He who adds to it is a benefactor. The underlying law, then, and the fundamental virtue, of all mind in religious connections which, at this point, I would emphatically impress upon you, is activity. The proof of God is found, beyond all else, in your thinking; and the thinkers of the world are the perpetual evidences of the truth of the Bible when it declares that God made man in his own image.

The human intellect is the offspring of the Supreme Intelligence. No less cause than this can be assigned as able to produce such a result. There was but one orb that could throw out such a beam.

The primal relation of the human mind to the Deity was filial. Of this there can be no doubt. Nature alone is sufficient evidence. And what, pray, is the peculiar characteristic of filial connection? What is the initial attitude of the child's mind into which it grows continually as it advances in years? There is but one answer: the attitude is that of reverence. Reverence for parents is the universal virtue. Whoever ignores it becomes obnoxious to that fine sense in the human breast which makes it conscious of the fitness and unfitness of things. The child that does not reverence father and mother—unless their conduct has been so outrageous as utterly to sever the great bond of nature—whoever, I say, does not reverence his father and his mother, has committed one of those great transgressions possible only to him who rebels against the rudimental laws of his nature. For nature everywhere and in every tribe gives a certain authority to parentage, and throws about it

a sanctity not to be denied or overlooked. In this we are, I presume, all agreed.

Well, what shall we say, then, touching the proper attitude of the human mind to its Creator, if not this, that its attitude should be reverential? This conclusion we reach, you observe, not by following the line of any dogma, but by following the line of nature. Nature alone constitutes a perfect bible from which to read the commandment of duty. Your minds are the offspring of that Supreme Intelligence which they resemble. And if your minds are not in a reverential attitude toward God, they are in a state of transgression; not as touching any verbal statute, but as touching the great ineradicable principle of natural relationship.

This reverence on the part of the human mind touching God refers not only to him as to his nature, but to him equally as to his creations and surroundings. The mind that rightly apprehends its relationship to the Divine Being reverences not only him, but all that he has made. It apprehends him in his divergence, in his distributiveness, in the varieties of his expression. Like the Hebrew, it apprehends him in the beauty of the firmament. Like the Egyptian, it sees him in the patience, the usefulness, and the cunning of animal life. Like the Greek, it admires the divinity as seen in the symmetry of outline and the loveliness of the human figure. Like the historian, it beholds him in the progress of events, and in the succession of forces, as they have been evolved from the various attempts at government. Nor does such a mind fail to see the evidence of its Master's presence in little things. In grasses, in flowers, in shrubs, in trees, in whatever there is of growth round about, the mind which is properly constituted reverentially apprehends Deity. There is, of course, a nature worship which is idolatry, and hence repulsive to us; but there is a worship of the Divine Principle, as existing in nature, as entered vibrantly into all her forms, as charged electrically through all her substances, which is not only proper, but is the highest evidence that the mind which is filled

with such adoration worships God largely and comprehensively. He who sees God in everything finds God everywhere; and out of this finding of God everywhere comes great restraint to our habits of thought and speech which leads on to a constant improvement of our morals. This comprehensive apprehension of God, this looking upon everything as sacred, because of his ownership of it, is recognized by Christ, when he said: "Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool."

You thus see that the reverential principle is not only rudimental to the mind, but that it is a principle of very fine quality, and both wide and practical in its application. It might almost be said that a thoroughly reverential mind would not commit sin. See what reverence would do: it would check all profanity. It would for ever stop blasphemy. It would restore parentage to the throne of its dignity, and surround it with finest regard. It would prevent cruelty to animals, as it did among the Egyptians. It would inculcate the duty of physical education, beyond what the artistic vanity of the Greeks did. It would bring to the assistance of devotion the loveliness and grandeur of nature, as it brought them to the aid of Hebrew piety; and last of all, perhaps finer than all, it would deepen and confirm the humane impulse, and cause every one to recognize the divinity in human nature, and to include all men, wherever living, however situated, within the embrace of universal brotherhood.

An irreverential mind is, as you thus see, the root out of which all manner of evil sprouts. All impiety, all blasphemy, all profanity, all tyranny over men, all robberies of the right, all cruelty against persons, draw the sap of their accursed vitality from it. Its outgrowths are rank; the branches of it are pushed out until they shadow the world; and the sweat of their leaves, like that of the poisonous trees of the tropics, loads the very winds with the burden of its contagion. Men breathe the tainted air, and morally die.

One of the worst signs of this age is the dying out of the

reverential sentiment. There is a certain flippancy in modern intellect, a smartness and pertness which spring from the growth of an egotism which lacks gravity and largeness of thought, because it is divorced from that sentiment which teaches one the sanctity of all persons and things made by the Divine Being. Even religious scholarship suffers from the absence of the devotional element. Theological studentship strikes one as being overmuch the exercise of mental gymnastics. Scriptural doctrines are preached dogmatically, and become tinctured with the hue and colour of partisanship. The nourishment for piety is drawn too much from the breast of human institutions, and too little from the Divine bosom. Religion thus becomes a series of opinions, and not a practice of duties enjoined by the conscience. And the church itself—which, of course, shares the spirit of the age—is no longer the home of the soul, the shrine at which devotion kneels, the altar-flame from which piety kindles her torch, but rather the arena where educated intellects contend, and from whose contentious rivalries sectarianism is engendered, and divisions caused between the naturally inseparable members of the body of Christ. But, friends, this phase of religious expression, this national habit, this custom of our age, will not last. It is the fashion of the hour, and with the hour it will pass away. Flippancy cannot endure in the presence of those august solemnities which, by the discoveries in nature and the developments of the spirit, are being revealed. Standing underneath the uplifted majesties of the future, men will become graver in their thought. The world will chatter less and adore more. It will not search less eagerly for the hidden truth, but it will search for it more on its knees; and the hymns it sings when fresh truth is discovered will be in praise of him into whose nature and doings every expression of truth strikes its central root. For, when God shall be apprehended in things, all studentship as to the nature of things will be but a searching after him; and the reverence which such a recognition and such a purpose must inspire will fall upon all men, as the silence of evening falls upon the earth.

The third characteristic of mind that has a special religious relation is humility, and the exceeding excellence of this trait will be more clearly apprehended when it is set in contrast with its opposite, arrogance. This arrogance of intellect is as old as studentship, and as offensive as human pride. Its results are beyond expression deplorable. Its tendency is to make men self-opinionated, domineering, and insulting. It has been the mother of oppression. It has dictated persecutions beyond number. It has driven the sword of war even to its hilt into the white bosom of peace, and often made the church, which is by nature a dispenser of the mercies of God, an engine of the devil. Its culmination is seen in the assertion of infallibility. He who lays claim to such powers of judgment advertises himself as the colossal arrogance of the world. Frame this self-sufficiency and self-assertion of judgment into an ecclesiastical system; throw around it the sanctity of tradition and of holy ceremonies; back it up with a claim founded upon sentences of Scripture,—still, even thus modified, thus toned down, thus veiled, it will appear repulsive to every instinct of a piety characterized by the spirit of him who charged his followers to call no man master.

The claim of infallibility, whether of the church or of science, rests upon the assertion of an intellectual arrogance, averse to the tenor of Scripture, the spirit of Christianity, and the freedom of man. Even when it does not take to itself this superlative expression, but shows an humbler post, it still is offensive to piety. Now arrogance has expression in the church, not through the person and office of one pope, but of many popes. It accommodates itself to the circumstances and to the institutions of the country. It exists in every theological seminary which expels a student because he does not think like the Professors. It can be found in every ministerial association where two or three men can hold the charge of heterodoxy, like the executioner's axe, over the head of any brother who is inspired to think a new thought or put an old truth in new forms of speech, or question the correctness of

an old interpretation. It sits at the right hand of many of our deacons and elders, and dictates to the pulpit what it is safe to preach, and what is unsafe to preach. It can be found even in the membership of the church, and finds expression in the majority vote on the question of lack of confidence in the pastor, because he had blundered into saying, or been inspired to say, in ten years of his ministry, one new thing; for there are congregations who cannot stand a new idea once in ten years. In all these ways, and others that I might have mentioned, arrogance crops out. Protestantism has its popes, and under the name of conscientious conviction, of regard for the truth, and the like, cruelty, harshness, and personal spite still mantle themselves as they did in the days of persecution. The spirit is the same; the expression differs. Instead of stabbing men with swords and daggers, as they once did, they stab them with charges which kill reputation, and dirk them with insinuations which repel public confidence. Instead of burning a man's body, as they did of old time, they now char a man's character over with the torch of many slanders, until his very innocence appears black, and he who is simple as a child is represented as having lived in life-long duplicity and intrigue.

Now, friends, truth does not need any such protection as these men would give it. It is as free as the wind; and you cannot imprison it if you would. Nor can it be soiled even by the touch of careless and unwashed hands. Truth protects itself and blows itself clean. The Pope at Rome—and, so far as he is a true minister of Christ, I speak his name with reverence—and our hundred and one popes here at home, need not trouble themselves with the task of shielding truth from those who spoil her. God will protect his truth, and these little gentlemen need not worry over her destiny. She will keep the fulness of her orb and the majesty of her movement along that orbit whose line is prolonged beyond mortal computation. Yea, and she will move with accelerated motion, and re-inforce her splendours from the flame generated by her own rapid revolution, when these, her puny and self-constituted guardians, are sleeping in

their unknown and unnoted graves. No, friends, we need not worry about truth or new ideas and conceptions of it. The world has never been hurt by new, fresh thought, whether its object was religious or scientific. The church is not being hurt to-day by fresh sermons, nor by new arguments. Her audiences are being driven away by a repetition of the old sermons, and the dull iteration of old arguments. She lacks nothing so much, in her pulpits, as prophets; that is, men who talk ahead of their times; whose vision forecasts her future necessities, and whose hands labour to shape her administration so as to meet those necessities. The church is losing her appetite because there is too much sameness as to her diet. She needs a change of food. And this change of food implies new discoveries, new applications of truth already discovered, and the preparation of old matter in new forms.

I trust that none of you students of the Bible, you searchers after truth, will ever stand in fear of any human authority whatsoever. Mental freedom is the first condition of religious growth. The truth that man discovers for himself is the truth that he loves best. Keep, therefore, young men, your intellectual liberty. Hold to it as your divine birthright. Interrogate all mystery. Question every assertion that is made in the name of religion. Sink the plummet of your investigation into all depths. Sound for yourselves until you feel the lead touch bottom. Be active in all your faculties. Be reverential in your feelings towards God. But resist all tyranny, whether it comes in the form of priest, or church, or creed.

The worst phase met with to-day is the arrogance of what is known as Radicalism. There is a class of men in this country and in England whose whole philosophy is that of negation. Their wisdom consists in denial. They deny the existence of God, they deny the exaltation of Christ, they deny the truth of the gospel, they deny the intelligence of piety, they deny everything that faith credits or the converted soul believes. Their sole object seems to be to undermine and pull down every structure which Christian faith and hope have builded. A more



self-conceited and arrogant set of men never lived. They fulminate their scepticism as if they spoke with the authority of a God. A scientific supposition is made to subserve the purpose of a fact. Their speculations are announced as if they were demonstrations. They are all kindred in the fashion of their behaviour. Their utterances are monotonous. He who has heard one of them lecture has heard all. He who has read one volume has mastered their entire system, if such vagaries of thought can be called a system. Bring them all together, strip them of their various names and their personality, lump them in one embodiment, and they represent a solid mass of self-conceit. That such men can have any lasting influence on the thought and morals of the race is preposterous. They are simply an accident of the times. They simply represent human eccentricity. They are like those floating islands which, by the action of unknown causes, are pushed upward to the surface of the ocean, float about for a few years, and then suddenly disappear. So these men have been pushed up to the surface of the age; they will attract attention for a time, and then they will sink from public sight. There is not an element of permanency in their teachings.

There is but one force, young men, in the world, which endures; but one element that lives: it is that of positiveness. A negative platform in politics, a negative philosophy, a negative form of religion, never lasts. You must have a positive platform, a positive philosophy, and a positive religion, if it is to live. The human soul craves fixed facts. Like a spent swimmer, it longs to touch bottom, and feel the bank. He who brings man in contact with a substantial truth will always be called a benefactor. He who teaches him to doubt, to distrust, may be, at first, admired for his cunning; but, in the long run, he will be rejected as an unwise teacher and a nuisance. The positive forces attract him, and must continue to attract him, while the human mind keeps its present construction. Infidelity must always be local. It can

never become universal. It is an epidemic, and not the normal condition of mental healthfulness.

I have now discussed the relations which mental activity, the quality of reverence and the quality of humility, hold to religious development. If you desire religious growth, you must keep your bodily organs thoroughly healthy, your mind active, reverential and humble. One more thing alone remains to be said, and with its saying I draw my discourse to a close. And this one thing which we need, we need beyond everything else : it is love of the truth.

Truth is the soul of form. It is the spirit which lurks in all substance. It is the genius which lives in law. It is the inspiration of love. It is the crown and glory of man's noblest effort. In seeking it men have passed their lives. To behold the brightness of its face, men have walked bravely into the darkness of death. In order to know truth you must first desire it—desire it with your whole heart, desire it for its own sweet sake. In order to find it you must free your mind from all prejudice, from all vanity, from all pride. You will look for it on a throne, and you will find it in a manger. You will look for it in honour, and you will find it in shame. You will look for it among the wise, and you will find it among the ignorant. You will look for it under the royalty of a crown, and you will find it on a cross. You will search the letter, and you will find that the letter does not include it. You will search for it in creeds, and after forty years of belief, you will discover that your creed does not contain it. You cannot stamp it on the pages of a pamphlet any more than you can tie the wind to the tree tops. But he who searches for it actively, reverently, humbly, and because his soul loveth it, will, somewhere, sometime, find it ; not all at once, nor in the way he expected,—but little by little, and in the way of surprise. As he finds it, so shall he find delight. It will be sweet to his soul. Peace, too, shall come with it—the peace which passeth understanding—the peace that makes man a marvel unto himself. This studentship of the truth is an everlasting studentship.

Time gives us the opportunity to begin; eternity will give us an opportunity to continue, our studies. Christ seemed to have but one ambition; it was to live the truth. As a teacher his object was to inspire his disciples with a love for it. In every way that ingenuity could suggest he studied to throw them back upon that as their only resource. Forms were nothing, customs were nothing, traditions were nothing. Truth was everything. Loyalty to it was by him esteemed the cardinal virtue of an immortal mind.

Can we do better, my people, than to accept his ambition and his judgment? Is there anything else worth living for? Is there anything else worth dying for? What is wealth, what is fame? What is luxury of surroundings? What is the applause of men compared with its possession? What else can we take with us into eternity? Nothing. It will constitute our sole wealth when we depart this world. If truth be all that we can carry hence when we pass between the pillars of death, foolish indeed is he who comes to the supreme moment of his life empty-handed. Wise and happy is he who, having sought it, has it in fact, and also the habit of seeking it. For the habits we have here we shall have there; the discipline we have here we shall take with us there; our likes, our preferences, and our loves also will accompany us, and whatever we have we shall start the next life with; and I suspect we shall have little else to start it with. For I take it death will not separate us from aught we have, or add aught to us.

Seek, therefore, I repeat, my people, after truth. Make it the star of your life, and advance, as the messengers of Jove, were said to run, with your eyes fastened on your star. For the eyes that gaze steadily at it are kindled in all their depths by the beams that they receive, and the faces that are kept lifted toward it take of the glory to which they are lifted, and shine with more than mortal beauty, and so are changed from glory into glory, and made fit to stand among the sons of God.

## RELIGIOUS TOLERATION, OR CHARITY

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

*"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations  
For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth  
herbs."—ROMANS xiv. 1.*

YOU may consider this entire chapter to be the source of my theme, and the theme, therefore, to be the Toleration of Religious Opinion.

The word "toleration" suffers a change of meaning in successive times. To suffer an opposite sect to worship at all, to suffer your religious opposite to live, was once the meaning of toleration. But we have passed beyond that usage of the term, and have come to a better age, when toleration means the extending toward one of different belief our friendship and all the civilities of refined or Christian life. Not daring any more to put men to death for their opinions, the question remains as to how much ill-feeling we must suppress, and actual good-will reveal. This is the form assumed by the question in our enlightened and free country.

We suffer the pain that comes from discussing a subject too large for the hour—a subject the complete investigation of which would demand your study, your reading, your deep interest for days instead of moments. Each week in this era, when the world has grown so broad in its means of investigation and in

its power to investigate, the pulpit more and more must feel that it can only suggest lines of thought, and in its half-hour indicate subjects worthy of the more deliberate and thorough study of the multitude. In our vast world, the clergy and all public speakers have become only an index of the book of knowledge, instead of being the grand solid volume in which the wisdom is all elaborated. In the ages of great vices the clergy were likened unto finger-boards which pointed out to others paths in which they did not themselves journey. This is, perhaps, no longer true as to virtue, but it is as to knowledge, for, like finger-boards, we can point out the paths of study and research, but are unable to go with you in the long but impressive journey.

This chapter from St. Paul is worthy of being learned by heart, and then, in many a silent hour when alone, we would find discourses flowing into our souls from that great perennial fountain. The words, "him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful disputations," draw their truthfulness from the very nature and condition of man. The fact that man is by nature imperfect, makes it necessary that he should also be tolerant. The fate that gave man a career of comparative ignorance ought to secure for him a career full of charity and forgiveness given and received. There is nothing more universal than ignorance, and hence there should be no virtue more universal than toleration of religious opinion. By ignorance I do not mean barbarism, but that humility of knowledge confessed by even the most learned of each successive generation. The facility with which we all absorb error, the readiness with which we all fall into deep and blind prejudices, should make us always ready, not indeed to excuse sin against light, but to tolerate many shades of religious opinion. It is folly to demand a unity of belief in a world where there is no one wise but God, and no one good except God. Some of the best men who have ever lived are now seen to have been the victims of great errors; and the persecutions they carried forward in the name of their superior wisdom appear to us now in a bad light indeed, when

it is now evident that they themselves held only a very imperfect system of doctrine. Their mistake lay in the assumption that they had reached the ideal in religion; whereas, God only holds the ideal in knowledge; man deals only in the imperfect. It was a maxim of the ancients that you must not praise one until after he is dead, for there is no security that he may not commit a crime or reveal a folly even in his most mature days. The old statesman may at last accept a bribe, or may, having been a republican, become at last an aristocrat and a despot. We must pause until he has ended his career, and then, if he dies in perfect honour, praise may chant its song safely over that tomb which ends all the vicissitudes of earth. Cæsar set out as a great Roman republican, the hater of crowns and lover of the dear people; but, says the play, "Was the crown offered him thrice? Aye, marry, was't, and he put it by thrice, every time gentler than the other." According to history, Cæsar's democracy was being drained out of him in the late years of his career, thus showing us that the grave is the place for pronouncing the true eulogy over man. After God has let the curtain fall, then we can come with our estimate of love or sorrow.

The same philosophy must apply to the forms of Christianity that walk in a sort of individual life before us. I should not be willing to put to death any one for not being a Presbyterian or a Methodist—not be willing, because these religions have not come to their final estimate. There may be great errors within them that have escaped our sight, some hidden evil, like that in Cæsar, which made him push back the crown each time gentler than before. It is possible that some other form of doctrine might have brought greater virtue and happiness to society, and it is possible that out of the future a church will be born dearer than either both to man and God. Hence it is necessary for those living within these two vast denominations to move along in charity toward mankind, waiting not for the tomb, in this case—for they may not perish—but for the verdict of futurity. If, in the end of the human race, or in the end of this or the next century, the millions of earth shall look back and say that

Presbyterianism or Methodism led a useful, beautiful life, and then sweetly died because of something better, that praise will sound like music over our tombs, unsullied either by egotism or blood. The Saviour said, "Why call ye me good? there is none good but God." None wise but him. Hence the highest aspiration of an individual or a church should be to walk along in humility and tenderness, and wait for the final verdict of God and humanity.

All intolerance is based upon egotism. It proceeds from the assumption that you have reached the ideal. When the Puritans banished the Quakers, it was done upon the assumption that the Pilgrims had brought the ideal over in their ship. They confessed themselves to represent God in doctrine and sentiment. But now that a few centuries have passed, and we are permitted to see the Puritan and the Quaker in the light of long generations, we perceive that the most truth and the best truth was in the keeping, not of those who ordained the banishment, but of those who endured it. The dreadful persecution to which the Catholics subjected the world all originated in a *human egotism* that cried, "I have found it! I have found it!" They had become the exponents of God. Whereas now history shows that in all cases the persons exiled or put to death held a better creed at the time than those who forced upon them the bitter fate. The origin of intolerance has never been the deeper truth, but the deeper egotism. It comes from a forgetfulness that God only is wise, and from an assumed agency for the Almighty in worldly affairs.

It is a weakness of man that when, in business affairs, he is employed to perform some office for an estate, or a government, or corporation, he, by some strange metamorphosis not mentioned in Ovid, becomes very soon the owner of the estate, or the centre and soul of the government, or sole owner of the caravansera or the empire. Intolerance in religion is nothing else than the outcropping of this human infirmity amid other surroundings. All the difference is that this graver assumption possesses an *egotism more solemn* and less manifest; but it is the same self-

transformation of a mortal into a Deity. It is a proverb of the Bible, "Let not him that girdeth on his armour boast himself as he that taketh it off," for the events that may come on between the morning of the battle and its night are many and unreadable. The heart, however strong and confident, must wait till the struggle is over. This rule must be seen at once to apply to all individual and sectarian life. In a world of uncertainty, that applies to the realm of truth as well as to that of military skill, one dare not boast until the warfare is over. Each one must pursue his path of duty with fidelity, and then calmly wait for time or eternity to measure the quality and quantity of the truth and the service. It ought to be a warning against all feeling of intolerance that the ideas over which most blood has been shed have, in subsequent experience and thought, been proven to be either useless or false. The dogmas for which one age has put thousands to death have, by a subsequent age, been withdrawn as false, or neglected because useless. But one might have premised that the most intolerance would always be found gathered about the least valuable doctrine, because the most valuable doctrines are always so evident to human reason that no thumb-screw or faggot is ever needed to make the lips whisper assent. Over the idea that two and two make four no blood has been shed; but over the insinuation that three may be one or one three there has often been a demand for external influence to brace up for the work the frail logical faculty. It is probable that no man has ever been put to death for heresy regarding the Sermon on the Mount. Its declarations demand no tortures to aid human faith. But when a church comes along with its "legitimacy," or with its Five Points, or with its Prayer Book, or its Infant Baptism, or Eternal Procession of the Holy Ghost, then comes the demand for the rack and the stake to make up in terrorism what is wanting in evidence. In the fourth century Christianity had already been divided up into ninety different sects. Whether Christ had two souls, one human and the other divine, became a dividing question, and *each party persecuted the other*. And, also, the time of



celebrating Easter involved the salvation or damnation of men. And when the nature of the light at the Transfiguration was discussed at an early council, it was resolved that any one contending that the light making the halo about Christ was not uncreated—a soul brilliancy—should be deprived of Christian burial at life's close. Thus, where evidence was most wanting, it has been most customary to find outside aids to faith. When witnesses were wanting, the High Priests rent their clothes.

History will, no doubt, bear me out in the assertion that the quantity of intolerance has always been inversely as the value of the doctrine, the greatest bigotry always crystallizing around the least valuable idea. If God has so fashioned the human mind that all its myriad forms can agree upon doctrines that are most vital; and if, as a fact, persecution has always attached itself to the small, then we would seem to have the curse of God visibly revealed against intolerance, in the fact that he has separated it from the large and evident, and linked its destiny to that which is both unimportant and doubtful. With the experiences and exposures of a thousand years before us, we all, if feelings of intolerance rise in our hearts, are bound to feel that, perhaps, we have fallen down from the upper air, and are lying flat in that realm of non-essentials whose support has always come, not from sweet truth, but from passion.

If you say, have not all the sects an inspired guide in the New Testament? Can they not all read the same words, and thus reproduce the same church and the same creed? The answer is easy: An inspired word does not insure an inspired interpretation. The marriage contract is an inspired institution, perhaps. Assume it to be such. The details of its rights and powers are human. It is a divine union, subjected to human rendering. In order to make the marriage relation perfect, all possible forms and circumstances of it should have been furnished men along with the central idea. But the Creator never perfectly equips man. He gives him a feeble outfit, like a son started by his father for a new country. The son has a common *school education, habits of industry, and a hundred pounds.*

Subsequent things must come by subsequent labour. The Bible gives only an outfit—the implements of industry. The Bible is thus submitted to human interpretation; and thus inspiration, like the river through old Eden, is divided up into four parts. The Presbyterian reads preacher; the Episcopalian takes up the same page and reads bishop; the Calvinist sees all the words that exalt fate; the Arminian all the words that exalt free will. In baptism, the Baptists behold a man applied to water; the other sects behold water applied to the man. It is thus readily seen that inspiration will not secure unity unless there be inspired interpretation, and then interpretation of that version, onward and onward, until the mind of man is wholly superseded by the infinite interference of God. An Episcopalian clergyman once said in my hearing, that when Paul sent for the garment he left at Troas, what he wanted was the surplice used in his sacred oratory; whereas other denominations suppose it was the grand old Roman cloak, worn, not so much in the name of religion, as in the name of the North Wind. Either theory is adequate, for there is no doubt the classic speakers used their cloak as a part of rhetoric; and there is no doubt it was valuable, all through the damp winter solstice. Inspiration, therefore, does not promise unity of belief. So the Bible speaks of witchcraft and of lunacy; but it does not inform mankind how to discriminate between the witch and the lunatic. Hence, whereas our ancestors hung ten thousand witches, we build asylums for ten thousand insane, and protect with love, perhaps, those whom a former age consumed with fire.

The fact of a Bible will not secure unity of belief and action, because in the interpretation the human mind re-appears in all its individuality and lawlessness. No truth can be so plainly set forth that subsequent generations will not stumble amid the words and sentences of the place that uttered them. No men are more accustomed than lawyers and lawmakers to an exact use of words; but it used to be said that American law, once gathered up, had to be sent to England to be interpreted for

the very nation that made it ; and for this reason the interpretation of law is the chief pursuit of the very mind that expresses and enacts it. In such a world unity of religious belief could only be secured by God's silencing the human mind, and placing himself upon the throne of human reason, with reason bound in chains at his feet. But this would be the annihilation of man, and better than this is the progress of man, with a charity as broad as human life ; with a toleration as universal as our ignorance and our mistakes ; with a mutual forgiveness as omnipresent as are the shadows and mysteries of human life. All that is needed is a diversity without sorrow or even surprise ; a variety as of clouds or wild flowers.

We stated, a few moments since, that it is the tendency and necessity of intolerance to spend its force upon the least significant doctrines that spring from authority or fancy, rather than from the most evident wants of society. To determine what doctrines are essential, and to feel how misplaced all intolerance has been, just look back, and you will see how few are the valuable ideas that emerge from a given age and reveal themselves. Oh ! is it possible that the thousands of tenets for which men were racked were too feeble to outlive the very fire that burnt the heretic ? Oh, yes ! it is possible. Heretic and fire and the idea are all gone together. The idea that killed noble men was itself too feeble to live.

Look back over the history of Jewish or Catholic or Waldensian or Protestant sect, and when you seek for their ideas of value you come at last to their charity, and purity, and faith in God and the Saviour—their pursuit of knowledge and hope of heaven. You think of nothing else. You shovel away the dust and débris of centuries, that by chance you may come upon these jewels in the diadem of religion. And if you find these, you bless the old church that lived and died on the spot. But all else is beneath your notice. Rubric, surplice, prayer-book, two souls of Christ, the Easter time, the transfiguration light, the election, the predestination, the laying on of hands, all count no more with the thoughtful historian seeking for the

merits of an age that counted the costumes of those eras or the carriages they drove. We place them below price. There is a certain divine instinct in man that enables him, when measuring the past, to become noble, and seize upon the valuable elements in character, and pass by the temporary without any doubt or regret; but dealing with the present, this divine instinct seems to desert us, and, grasping an accident in our arms, we permit virtue and faith and charity, God and heaven, to fall through to the dust. How is it that when we contemplate either the past or the future, a certain nobleness goes with us that overlooks all small things, and cleaves to the good, and that all the littleness we possess is concentrated within the pulse-beats of to-day? The only explanation must be this—that each man's real life is smaller than his soul. It is belittled by the prejudices and interests of the passing hour; but when he goes to examine the past, or throws his mind forward a century, he leaves behind him his sect, and his ambition, and his outlook of business, and his real estate, and goes to the past and the future only as a soul, a thing of thought and love, an image of the Almighty. We love the simplicity of our fathers who were virtuous in plain houses: looking to the future, we see a return to simplicity and call it a golden age, but in the present we love furniture, and to fare sumptuously every day. This is because the present grinds us by its customs and sins, and hence escaping backward or forward we behold the truth as it is in God. Thus the soul of each man is greater always than his daily life. Present business and vices eclipse the spirit.

In order, therefore, to find the best idea of the Christian church, and perfectly to escape the intolerant spirit, one would do well to resort to the past, where he can perceive that the ideas over which most blood was shed were ideas that died soonest, and that were of least utility while living; or would do well to rush to the future, and there find that only a few cardinal truths of character and of the cross, of virtue and heaven, have dared to assemble in the holy air. Backward or forward, and there is seen a wonderful death of the small, and

wonderful resurrection of the great ; because, backward or forward either, there is a wonderful return of the soul to the justice and intuition of its Maker. Reflection, backward or forward, is like that strange mirage along the lakes whereby cities and landscapes are repeated in the sky in only their purity, all their sins, and diseases, and miasmas, and crimes, and sorrows being left on the ground beneath. The outlines of palaces, the spires of God's temples, the forests, the everlasting hills, are the only things worthy of being uplifted by the white arms of the radiant light. So in history, or in futurity, we see the Christian church in the sublime outline of Jesus Christ, all else being left in the dust beneath.

Having in this brief argument found a ground for religious toleration in the natural uncertainty of human knowledge, and, in the fact that men have persecuted their fellows most over the smallest ideas, I would say only a few words against any form of intolerance, even when confessed errors exist in their worst possible forms. Suppose the heretic, as the world calls him, pronounces Christ an impostor, and denies the existence of God, still all the light that will ever come into his mind from man will be along the chords of friendship passing from the better heart to his. Words spoken without bitterness, spoken with the confession full and free of human equality, words wreathed with friendship, are the only ones that ever penetrate the soul. The man who hates us, and whom we hate, need not speak. His words are like a discord. Thus the ill-will of the old Puritans jarred like bells jangled out of tune upon the ear of Thomas Paine, and each anathema from the church only separated him farther from the presence and beauty of God, for God is not a God of discord, but of harmony. One of the ancient Greeks perceived this means of converting men, when he said, "The boxer advances with a closed fist, but the orator always with an open hand."

God has so created his human children that all their best happiness, their best home, their best government, their best reform, their best literature, their best art, springs up from a

deep friendship from man to man. Thus, therefore, the best Christianity will come, come the most, and the most rapidly. God himself being happiness and love, and the blessed Saviour having come to earth in the name of an infinite friendship, the genius and destiny of earth are mirrored in the Creator and Saviour, and earth's reform will come like republicanism and the arts, not by the discord of souls, but by their loving brotherhood. Friendship is the condition of civilization.

The classics used to call all the studies of scholars—history, poetry, art, eloquence, music—the humanities, because they brought no wars, no bloodshed, but set out from a human love, and advanced in the name of pleasure and peace.

Shall we not open the sacred list and insert among the dear humanities that religion whose love surpasses all measurement, and whose tears for man fall like dew from the manger to the cross? The first disciples came not by violence, but by a blessed invitation. One of them was grandly transformed, not by persecution, but by resting in peace where his head was near a divine heart. In the name of such a sublime scene we are all bound to speak religion's truths in love, and to offer our fellow men, not doubtful disputations, but a place of forgiveness and peace upon a heart divine in breadth and tenderness.

## THE GOLDEN RULE.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

*"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."*—MATTHEW vii. 12.

THE transition from barbarous to civilized life may be read by the progress made toward just and uniform and universal laws. If the quantity of gold were an evidence of civilization, the Spaniards of Old Mexico equalled New England in the civilized condition. If raiment and elegant furniture and palaces were a proof of human progress, the Turks and the Chinese emperors have long been the equals of Washington and Lincoln. But it seems evident that, in the composition of the Mexican, and Turk, and Orientalist at large, there is some element wanting, preventing their condition from being a culture, a civilization. While it is impossible to find all the delicate threads that make up a great and complete human character, it seems evident that no one fact so truly indicates civilization as the presence and activity in a nation of general laws of right, and industry, and happiness—wise, and tender, and uniform. The libraries of England, her myriad ships, her literature, would not complete for her a form of civilization, if she still held slaves, or still hung children for theft, or hung old women for witchcraft, that is, for dressing in black and growing weak in body and mind. And America was the reproach of the family of nations until she freed her slaves.

The highest idea man can cherish being that of right, and the most divine conduct being obedience to the laws of right, there could be no high civilization with such an idea and such a conduct disregarded; and hence the honour of civilization never comes with man's furniture, and silks, and gold, and commerce, but with his broad, intelligent justice. It being so essential, therefore, that each individual be engaged in the practice of justice, and that each member of society receive a fair treatment from all around him, a law expressed in words that shall be brief, true, and easily comprehended is more desirable than pages of philosophy or of poetry, or galleries of art.

The golden rule is, no doubt, one of the most fundamental laws that can ever be expressed in words or carried in the mind of man. Nature's great law that matter attracts matter; that a vast central world will attract planets from a straight line into a circle; that an earth will draw a falling apple to itself, and hold its liquid sea and liquid air close to itself, and will hold the seas under the air and the land under the sea, is not more fundamental in the material world than the golden rule is in the world of duty and happiness. Take away the single principle discovered by Newton, and the organized universe is at once dissolved; air and water and land mingle; our globe would become a fluid, and fill its orbit with a floating débris of itself. The golden rule underlies our public and private justice, our society, our charity, our education, our religion; and the sorrows of bad government, of famine, of war, of caste of slavery, have come from contempt of this principle.

Of the origin of this statement little can be learned. It is almost impossible to conceive of any degree of enlightenment that could have escaped it; it would seem so easy for any one seeing a fellow-man committing an unjust and cruel act to say, "How would you like to be treated in that style?" And yet, whenever such a feeling of inquiry has risen in the heart, that has been the shadow of the golden rule—the question, *How would you love to be treated thus?* is the principle. It is diffi-



cult to imagine a day that could have been ignorant of this application of justice. It must have been the lament of Cain over the dead body of Abel that he had done as he would not have wished to be done by. It is incredible that any historic land should wholly have escaped the thought. The history of the world is so imperfect (and then, so far as it goes, is only a history of wars and kings, and not a history at all of morals or thought), that we know little of the maxims and constitutions that lay beneath old actions. What David thought after he had slain Uriah, or what Cæsar thought when he had murdered a few hundred thousand Germans, can never be culled from a history that looked with contempt upon any facts less conspicuous than a crown, or a pageant, or a battle-field. Even if over the most of the great heathen world there rose such a cloud of vice and cruelty that the public never came up to this sweet sense of reciprocal kindness, yet there might have been tender hearts here and there in all ages, from Babylon and Tyre to Rome and Athens, that wept tears of sympathy in the name of the golden rule. In Confucius, at last, this divine instinct of the soul began to break forth in history. He said, "You must not do to others what you would not they should do to you." This was only a refrain. It was a rule telling us what to avoid doing. The grand old Plato went further, and, in a kind of prayer, says, in the eleventh book of his *Dialogues*, "May I, being of sound mind, do to others as I would that they should do to me."

Thus in the long past this heavenly maxim gave frequent signs of its coming, and as the returning sun in the arctic zone after months of night begins to utter prophecies upon the horizon, so the golden rule began far back, and after a long night, to paint glorious prophecies upon the borders of man's moral night. All who have looked over history will, however, remember now what an immense difference there is between the first hint of a law or truth, and the final enthronement of the principle in the public heart. All literature of the church from *Augustine to Luther*, twelve hundred years, was full of Reforma-

tion ideas. Luther did not discover anything. He was not the first to express a single doctrine or fact. He was not the second, nor the tenth. Not a generation passed between Christ and the sixteenth century wherein some one did not come forward with the ideas which Luther afterward gloried in; and yet between these and Luther there lies an infinite distance created by the absence of individual elements such as Luther possessed, and the unfitness, unreadiness of society. To find the glory, therefore, of a truth you must not pause with the man who may have first announced it, for he may have had no conception of its worth, and may have given it little love, like the Sibyl who wrote prophecies which she did not herself understand, and which, written upon leaves, she permitted the winds to carry about never to be seen or cared for again. In order to locate the glory of discovery you must measure the heart and mind that first took hold of the idea or law in its infancy or later life. You will find the word liberty in Cæsar's history and in Cicero's ethics, but they knew nothing of the idea as compared with that conception of the word in the mind of a Wilberforce or a Polish exile.

There being such a vast difference between the utterance of a truth and the enthronement of it in mens' hearts, we must cast our chief offerings of gratitude at the feet of that One who had the goodness and greatness needed to hurl this law into life. Toward the golden rule Christ sustains this relation: He translated a principle into a law of every day and of every place and of every man, and then, by a strange power, and by a life and death of wonderful import, he hurled this world of love right into the bosoms of men. What other ages may have said or dreamed fades before the passion and grand uprising of that divine soul in Nazareth. In order to make this Saviour seem great as possible in the minds of the common people, the pulpit often seems to desire all inquiry to pause in the sacred text, and there find all science, all agriculture, all pleasures, all policies, all doctrines. *It desires mankind to think of the world as having begun all*

action with the voice of John in the wilderness. But this is a suppression of the truth that makes infidels of thousands of youth who are left to battle with strange questions in later life with learned men in the street, and in the halls of science and learning. Christianity needs no *suppressio veri*. It needs no art, no subterfuge. What it needs most of all is the open light of day, and the most perfect frankness of friend and foe. The facts seem to be these: The golden rule had tried long to grow up out of the human mind and spirit, and thus for thousands of years the soul stood prophetic of a Jesus. Upon a stormy sea the soul had long hung out signals of distress, and at times had dreamed it saw a harbour of refuge. In Plato it bowed in prayer for perhaps what seemed above mortality, but the storm continued and the prayer died away. If now Christ came to answer the long-flying signal of distress, to make more universal a prayer that seemed too good for even one; if he came to answer the longing wrung out of the heart by the agony of long injustice; and if, by lifting the world up, he made their foreheads touch these divine letters, that is glory enough, especially for the Meek and Lowly One, who came not to seek applause, but to bring a salvation, and wear, if need be, a crown of thorns.

It is enough that at Christ the great law sprang into life, and became not a philosopher's dream, but the constitution of a new civilization. Our national idea that man has an inherent right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness can be found in all the poetry of the world, from the Zend Avesta to Cowper's Task; but the great day of the idea dawned when a great nation, covering a continent, and destined to count soon a hundred millions, wrote down this principle as the basis of a national life; dawned when thirteen States and three millions of men took their stand there, and, unfurling a beautiful flag, looked up like Martin Luther, and said, "So help us, God." So the coronation day of the golden rule came when that tender expression of justice crept out of the poetry of Plato, and, made sacred by Christ's life and death, quickened into being by the

intensity of a soul from Heaven, that lived not in words, but in deeds, glorified by the cross, and the resurrection, and a near paradise, was incorporated fully into the constitution of a kingdom larger than America, embracing nothing less than the globe, and raising for its flag God's banner of love, to wave on two shores—the here and hereafter. This was the grand unveiling of this masterpiece of spiritual art.

But we pass away from this awarding of merit to speak further of the law itself.

You all know how near and dear a thing one's own self is. The moment we step away from our own consciousness we lose our mental grasp upon the phenomenon of right or wrong. We can look upon a suffering man, sick or wounded, with comparative peace, because our knowledge will not travel away from our own consciousness. We may say, "Poor man, poor child, we pity thee;" but we are so cut off from his pain that an infinite gulf lies between our feelings and the sufferer's agony. But let that pain, that sickness, that dying, come to self, and how quickly the heart measures all the depths of the new sorrow! Oh, what a teacher is one's own breast! It is now reported that one of the victims of the Cuban massacre offered a million dollars if the savages would spare him his life. The death of others, the common calamities of life, had not filled with tremor that heart naturally brave; the grief of death at large had been, as it were, spoken in a foreign language not to be understood by him; but now the grim monster was coming up against self. It was his heart that was to be pierced with balls—not yours nor mine, but his own, bound to earth, to friends, to country, to home and its loved ones; his was to pour out its blood, and sink into the awful mystery of the grave. This was the vivid measurement of things that made the hero try to buy sunshine, and home, and sweet life, with gold. When it comes to any adequate measurement of life's ills or joys, the only line which man can lay down upon the unknown is the consciousness within, the verdict of this inner self.

The golden rule, therefore, surpasses all formulas of justice by bringing the case before this loving, trembling, sensitive self, and begging that it be tried in the light and justice of all this light of self-love, self-joy, and self-agony. Had the captives of the Virginus fallen into the hands of men who had come to that culture which can see the misfortunes of others in the light of one's own misfortunes, they would have been held as prisoners of war, or as criminals worthy, at least, of deliberative action; but falling into hands destitute of a divine consciousness to which to refer, their fate was the one that is meted out alike by the savage of the forest or the tiger of the jungle. Before man comes to the golden rule of arguing from a noble self outward, or after by vice he has obliterated it, we may well leave it to Darwin to determine whether he is man, or is still in the domain of the brute. The Colosseum at Rome, where eighty thousand poets, orators, and citizens gathered to see innocent men fight with each other and die—gathered under the eye of such barbarism that when brothers met in the arena, and did not possess the nerve to pierce each other's hearts, they were urged to the fray by red-hot rods pressed upon their naked bodies. This horrid chapter that defames the human race came from the absence of the justice which measures pain by our own pain, and happiness by our own happiness—that justice that travels from self outward, and makes the sorrow of others ours, and their happiness our happiness. In the reign of Trajan, ten thousand men thus fought. But what is it that has dispersed that mighty throng of Roman spectators? What is it that has made that marble house, where eighty thousand people could, by scores of stairs and arches, assemble or disperse in a half hour, a solitude, and has permitted the rains of many centuries to wash out the blood marks, or hide them with ivy and flowers? The religion that began at Nazareth, and taught man to measure another's rights and sufferings by his own, this is the philosophy that at last made the gladiators throw down their swords and take each other's hands in presence, not of a

colosseum, but of a world. The howl of wild beasts died away from the amphitheatre when this rule was spoken by the Saviour. Beneath the liberty of to-day, that has spread from America to England, and from England to France, and even Spain, and which has made kingdoms differ little from republics; beneath the freedom of slaves; beneath the public education of children, and the emancipation of woman; flows this simple principle, "What ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Such is the full acquaintance man possesses with self—such a quick and perfect realization has he of his own aversion to pain and love of happiness, that civilization may date its rise in the hour when man brings cases of duty up to this court in his own bosom.

In order, however, to render the golden rule successful, it is necessary that one have within him the cultivated attributes of manhood; for if his self be that of a savage, he can learn little within. But the truth is, the civilized world has, for the most part, a noble consciousness, capable, in occasional hours, of talking in the language of the sky. Rough though the life may be, there is within a full acquaintance with the meaning of such words as pain, grief, joy, sadness, purity, repentance. Is there a heart where this sunshine and shadow do not play like alternate day and night? All possess this form of supreme assize in their own bosom, and hither, Jesus Christ says, bring your business life, hither bring your enemies, hither your friends, hither bring the orphan child, hither the father, hither those without God and hope, and decide upon duty in the sanctuary of your own heart, where your own anguish or joy has in past days spoken to you with trumpet or angelic tongue.

I am unable to fathom the financial causes and effects that come here and there in the course of time. Like the wind, they come we know not whence, and go we know not whither. But while this whole question is too large and too obscure for the pulpit, and foreign to its office, yet after a financial storm has

come, and thousands, almost millions, of the poor feel its hard, cold breath ; when riches do not differ much from bankruptcy, we do know that the time has come for the golden rule to assume the person of an angel, and move about the streets from landlord to tenant, from bank to street, and from tenant to landlord, and street to bank, from palace to hovel, until the darkness shall be made light by a reciprocity that began in Christ when the human rose to the divine. It is probably God disturbs the surface of society constantly by pestilence, or fire, or revolutions, that his children may not live wholly for food and furniture, but may be brought face to face with the noble principles of soul, and thus be transplanted from a market-place to the world of mind and spirit. If financial success were the chief end of man, then all these defeats in the battle of gold would be a loss of labour and life indeed ; but if so be that the chief thing about man is his soul's character, then any calamity that abates material progress, and throws the heart back upon itself as related to man and God, must be accepted as an act of a benevolent Father of all. It is said that the dusty droughts which once in a few years dry up the grasses, grains, and flowers, and make a garden land a desert, are Nature's beneficent resort, that the earth being thus ridden of all her moisture, the sunshine and air may enter the labyrinth and remake by their new agencies those cells to which the roots of the verdure will descend in the subsequent years, and over that desert of one summer there will wave seven summers of richer harvest. In the history of morals and religion there comes a similar phenomenon in each group of years. Something called a public calamity spreads over country and home, making a desert of what was yesterday a paradise ; but if we assume that the chief end of man is the attainment of a noble character, then what are these calamities but hours in which the great human world is stripped of its vanity, that its soul may lie open to the air and sunlight of a kind God coming with the music of laws for which the soul was made, and without which it is hopeless poverty. These sub-

laws of life, of which the golden rule is only one, ought to call to feel that grand must be the ideal destiny of man when has flung down beneath him such laws of ascent, pointing perfection of heaven. If the ladder that sprang up before in his dream, pointing up to the stars, with angels on its was any hint to him, and all who read the dream, that there rld above this, then these laws of human action, so lofty, inging a consciousness so sweet, should seem, as it were, a with angelic spirits upon the steps, waving their hands l, and pointing out the destiny of the soul.



## THE TENDERNESS OF GOD.

BY REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

*"A bruised reed shall he not break."*—MATTHEW xii. 20.

THE world is hard—hard in its policies, feelings, and acts. Its judgments are harsh, and its penalties are cruel. Socrates it poisoned, and the Messiah it slew.

We may differ in our opinions as to the cause and origin of this state. You may have your views, I may have mine ; but we shall not differ as to the result. Each mind, advancing along its own path of reason and observation, comes to and halts at the same spot. The world is hard : in respect to that we agree. Its very religions have inoculated it with an evil virus—made it dogmatic, unmerciful, and fierce. In India, a woman's hope of heaven lies over the funeral-pyre of her husband, and from slavery here she passes through smoke and flame to servitude hereafter. Maternal affection—that holiest instinct of the human breast—is converted into an engine of destruction, and the arms which should protect, fling the babe into the waters of the Ganges. Every faith has had its martyrs, every creed been written in blood, and every benediction emphasized by an anathema. The honest convictions of the human heart have in every age been derided, and men have lifted up their voices and shouted in brutal violence over the ashes of human constancy. The best men, as the world counted goodness in the time of Christ, hated Christ the most. The teachers and exponents of God persecuted God the most

itterly when he was manifested in the flesh. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

There is nothing sadder than this retrospect of human perfections of divine knowledge and faculties imparted to man. The verdict of man's own acts is against him; and Calvary remains to-day, and ever will remain, the superlative expression of the natural cruelty of man on the one hand, and the tenderness of God on the other.

It has been granted us to live in a Christian age and land. The fagot and the torch are behind us. The arena no longer smokes with innocent blood, and the dungeon is no longer regarded as an agent of salvation. And yet the judgment of the world, through other media of expression, not unfrequently reveals the same harsh and unmerciful spirit. The Pharisees still live; and were there a Christ, there might yet be a cross, stoning an expression of their creed.

I am to speak of the tenderness and patience of God toward human weakness and human sin. Would that my words might open to your understandings clearer and truer views of the divine nature than some of you perchance have yet obtained. Would that I might aid you to conceive of your heavenly Father as he is—full of forbearance and tender mercies; yearning over you with a love you cannot conceive; drawing nigh to your hearts through his providence and the Gospels, as the sun, through every beam and ray, draws nigh to the earth in spring with its ministries of encouragement to growth, and sweet solicitation to fragrance and beauty. Then should you indeed be comforted and strengthened; then would your natures be quickened and stirred, and all their deep-rooted and wide-branching faculties of thought and feeling thrill with new and vernal expressions of life. The gratitude of our hearts would rise as incense before his throne, and each would say, "The doors of this place have been opened like the gates of heaven and the portals of peace."

It is pleasant for me to minister to you. It is pleasant for me to think that here we can worship and investigate together. It is pleasant to be conscious of the various experiences of our lives, various in our intellectual

conceptions of God, manifold in our wants, strangers by face; still our thoughts, like waters coloured and enriched by the several soils through which they come down to a common junction, can mingle and join in this hour and place. Hail to the hour when differences fade away; when strangers meet as friends; when the long-lost brotherhood of soul with soul, the almost forgotten fellowship in song, the bond of common impulse, is found at last in Christ!

I would first speak of the tenderness of God as shown at certain periods and seasons of our lives.

There are two ways of looking at man morally: one is to regard him as always struggling and always winning; the other, as never struggling and never winning at all. Both of these ways are wrong. On the one hand, there are times of great moral despondency and dejection—when the soul lies limp and inoperant, when the moral faculties seem benumbed and drugged into fatal lethargy, when the call of duty awakens no response, or elicits only rebellion; but there is never a time of stagnation. The soul, like the ocean, is full of currents, and they channel and pierce it with agitations. Life is full of impulses. It is breezy and tremulous; and as the winds of heaven sweep down upon the ocean and ruffle and convulse it, so upon us influences are poured, at the coming and pressure of which we cannot remain passive.

I think that in the heart of almost every man and woman, underneath the covering of forms, underneath the crust of heartless custom, underneath the habit of selfishness, you will find a generous impulse, a desire to grow better and to aid others in worthiness. God has not withdrawn his spirit from mankind. Above us is a moral firmament, and in it that spirit, like a more resplendent sun, is suspended. The rays of its light and warmth penetrate everywhere. They reach and minister to the lowest and coarsest forms of spiritual life. There is not a thought so dark, there is not a wish so ignoble, there is not an ambition so vain, that it is not less dark and ignoble and vain because of this influence. The God of the rose is the God of the bramble as

; and even the thorn-tree must leaf, and sweetness is  
 rted from the brier. This desire, this generous impulse,  
 t find expression. The warmth above stirs the deadness  
 ath, and makes barrenness uneasy. And yet, in spite of all  
 spiritual dejection comes, despondency and heaviness of  
 t ensue. We have struggled so much, and won so little;  
 have fought against circumstances, and by circumstances  
 defeated; the summit seems so far off, and the path so steep,  
 our courage fails at times, and we sink in despair. Between  
 triumph and ourselves are the garden and the cross; and,  
 ling alone in the darkness of the night, we wring our  
 ls and cry, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me!"  
 etimes a great temptation circles us on all sides; its cir-  
 ference of blackness girdles us, and we seek in vain for an  
 t to escape. We drop upon our knees in prayer, but  
 er brings no relief. We dash madly at the awful belt, but  
 it to be like a cable of triple steel. We rush frantically from  
 to side; circumstances conspire in evil conjunction. We  
 lazed, we are hopeless. The madness of despair seizes upon  
 and sinking down we say, "Why struggle longer? It is in  
 . Fate is against me, Heaven is not for me: I can do no  
 , I can only die."

y friend, don't you die; and never, never cease to contend.  
 n you have reached that position, know that you have come  
 near God. Weakness is ever near God. He draws nigh to  
 a mother draws nigh to a suffering child. What man or  
 an here, if when walking at night, you should hear the  
 of a deserted babe, would not follow the sound, and, running  
 ie little thing, lift it in your arms and carry it to shelter  
 care? And do you think God is less merciful than you?  
 ou think that you can teach him sympathy, or show him how  
 tender? Do you think that he ever heard a deserted soul  
 ug in the night of its trouble, and does not go to it and lift  
 his bosom, and carry it to the light and shelter of his love?  
 poor bruised reed is sacred in his sight; if the weak and  
 ded things in the natural kingdom—the trodden grass, the

broken bough, the falling birds—are not beneath his notice, who is he that dares to say the poor bruised soul is not for him to love, that the prostrate spirit and the breaking heart and the stifled hope are beyond the limit of his care and the reach of his helping hand? Why, consider this in the light of history and revelation a moment.

Who are they that whiten heaven with the flowing of their garments? Whose hands lift those ever-vibrating harps? Whose heads are crowned and wreathed? Whose brows are illuminated with that new name given them of God? Are they not those who came out of great tribulation; whose robes are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb? Who first followed the Saviour along the path of his ascension, and demonstrated in the sight of heaven the efficacy of the atonement as an act already accomplished? Was it not the thief who hung on the cross? Unto whom was given the keys of the kingdom, the badge of honour and high esteem? Was it not unto him who denied his Lord? Who was appointed to break the boundary of Jewish prejudice, to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and make it free as the water that runs and the light that shines? Was it not Paul, the persecutor of Jesus? And whose heart here is fullest of gratitude? whose lips beyond the grave will open quickest in thanksgiving?—whose? Of that one among us whose darkness was the most dense when the light of mercy broke through and illumined it!

No, no, my friend, don't you despair; there's hope in your future yet. There is not a hand's-breadth of sky between you and the grave to-day that is not of azure so long as in your heart lingers one regret for sin, one desire of doing good,—one longing for God, one hope of moral mastery. Put yourself in the right, then endure unto the end, and you shall be saved. What a joy it is to preach a gospel of hope to you!

Again I would remark, that if the bruised reed may represent our broken hopes, it may also represent our broken resolutions.

I have said already that our lives morally were marked with fluctuations. Our feelings rise and sink like waves of the

sea. If at one moment we gain the wished-for elevation, the next we are shaken from it as a bird is blown from the topmost branches of an exposed tree when a gust strikes it. And yet how noble is the mind of man in its conceptions! How far it can flash its thoughts! Along what interminable lines, across what vast spaces, the intellect can pursue its investigations! How exalted those emotions which inspire the soul at times, and lift it as on mighty and invisible wings above the earth and earthly surroundings! You have all had these moods,—these reachings out and elevation of feeling. You have had longings and dissatisfaction with self, and travailed in the birth of strong desires, begotten of God, to be better and accomplish more good. And you have more than once resolved that it should be so. In the street, in the office, and in the chamber, in the closet, in company, or alone with yourselves, conscience has smitten you, and you have said, “This thing must stop. I will change my course to-day, and be no more as I have been.” And some of you can date a great change from such moments,—such a change as comes over a rose when it blossoms, or over the heavens when the rising wind sweeps it free from clouds.

I believe every soul has such moments of conviction and resolution,—moments when more by far than we can see depends upon how we act; when our own happiness and the happiness of others hang poised on the decision of a moment. It takes but an instant and a single revolution of the wheel to turn the ship, but by that movement it is decided whether she shall anchor on this side of the globe or on that. It takes but an instant for the mind to act, yet in the passing of a thought it is often settled what will be the direction and issue of a life.

Now the past is full of such experience; such seasons of introspection and resolution have come to us all. Time and again have our souls mounted from the low level of our lives, like a lark tremulous with song; but no sooner had we poured forth the raptures of the passing impulse, than we dropped again into the marsh, and were ashamed at our own fickleness.

Now, friends, God, as I conceive, is never nearer to one than

when he stands dissatisfied with himself and manner of life, and longs to be better. When the mind is about to make a needed resolution, God invariably draws nigh to help it. Because you have broken one resolution, never imagine that he will not assist you to keep another, made with greater wisdom, and a more determined purpose. The temples of God, so far as we represent them, are all constructed out of ruins. He builds from the fragments of an ancient overthrow. Be persuaded of this, that nothing good in you ever escapes the notice of God. He is not, as some seem to picture him, a heartless overseer, standing over you whip in hand, and watching for a chance to get in a blow. His observation is like a gardener's. There is not a bud of promise that can open in your soul, there is not an odour that can be added to the fragrance of your lives, that he does not detect it and rejoice in it. Whatever beautifies you glorifies him. He delights in your development, and smiles on your every effort in that direction. God is always ready to give a man one more chance. The world is hard and smiting in its judgments, and swift as lightning in its censure; and its condemnation falls on a man as a huge beam of timber falls on the body, crushing it down to the ground and holding it there; but God is slow to wrath, full of forbearance and tender mercies. He prunes away the dead and soggy branches, he transplants and grafts; but he never cuts a tree of productive nature down; yea, after three years of barrenness the tree has yet one more year of grace, and the last year is fuller of care and nurture and enticements to fruitfulness, than all the others.

Now, I suppose that if the good resolutions we have formed and broken were represented materially to the eye, we should all appear to those that gazed upon us as standing amid fragments of former beauty and the cast-up foundations of former strength; and I suppose that morally we do so appear in the sight of God to-night. And the spectacle of our dejection and overthrow, of our failure and prostration, of our ruin and despair, *stirs him with pity*, and awakens all his mercy and compassion

in our behalf. And if there is one here who is worse off morally than the rest of us,—one who stands more bewildered and hopeless amid the debris of the commandments he has broken,—one who is more scarred and bruised than the majority of us,—God by an election of mercy draws nighest to that soul, and through the prayers and hymns and words of this service, the memories and uses of this day, he seeks to encourage that man to renewed spiritual effort, and inspire him with hope to try again. Why with hope? Because no man ever attempts anything without hope. There is not the least element of heavenly progress in despair, and the first thing the Spirit of God seeks to stir in the soul is a great expectation of a coming good. That divine influence comes out of the heavens upon a soul as a strong current of air, after a day of fog and storm, comes out of the west, clears up the clouded horizon of his life, sweeps the long-gathered and thickening darkness from over his head, and brightens the firmament with stars. Would that one and another of you here might feel this divine spirit coming to you in this manner, to-night, feel the atmosphere of your sluggish or stormy lives vibrate to the incoming of such change-working influences, and that ahead of you were years of sunlit effort, and at the close an hour of radiant decline! In this spirit of hope or prophecy—I know not which—I point you all to lives nobler than you have thus far lived, to a moral elevation of feeling higher than you have thus far experienced, to sympathies for man wider, deeper, more generous than you have thus far felt,—to a consecration of all your powers to God's service, and to an hour at last of spiritual victory and supreme reward.

And I want you all to feel,—because it is true,—that all this is made possible through the tender love of God for you, as revealed by analogy in nature, and more fully yet, as through a more perfect medium, in the life and death of his only-begotten Son, Christ Jesus our Lord.

This passage, this quotation from the Old Testament, in order to illustrate the spirit of the New, suggests to my mind *another thought, which grows, as I live, more and more*



delightful to me. It is this: that Christ does not and will not apply the least force or violence to propagate his law or religion.

Now, if there is one thing that my mind revolts at more than another, it is at any rude and violent interference with its independence, with the law and order of its free action. If religion meant surrender of intellectual freedom, if it meant subjugation of any faculty to superior power, if it meant bondage of thought and terror of motive, there is not a principle in my nature which would not rise up in arms against it. Heaven must not be made to appear to my mind as a vast corral, into which souls, like cattle, are stampeded by force or fear. And I know not of any style of speech more obnoxious to me than that which presents nothing higher, nothing nobler to men, to inspire them with religious tendencies, than the motive of fear. The horror of hell can furnish no well-regulated mind with an impulse toward heaven. And a preacher who appeals to fear, to sheer cowardice in his audience, is unfit to proclaim the Gospel of Christ. Such a speaker perverts and belittles the Gospels. He insults intelligence. He can find no warrant for his monstrous misinterpretation of God, and outrage on intellectual laws, in the teachings and conduct of Christ or the Apostles. Why, you might as well try to frighten a flower into lifting its face toward the sun as to frighten a soul into lifting itself toward God! The attraction of light and love from above, and not the propulsion of fear from beneath, is what accomplishes the beautiful result. There is no need of any such rude and tyrannous force, such violent benevolence. In the soul are certain capacities and affinities, and God is to them their natural object of love and service. To clear away the obstructions which Satan has pushed up between the soul and God, to enlighten the understanding, and thereby correct the judgment, to interpret God properly to the mind and heart of the hearer, is the preacher's duty and the preacher's joy. To send each hearer away at the close of a service feeling that he is thankful that the heavens are what *they are*, and God is what he is, and he himself is as he is, save

as to his sin, is the highest triumph of preaching. Why, you cannot frighten man even in the inclination of his appetites. You cannot break down and disrupt by force even the bulwark of his sensations. If any particular species of fruit—a pear, for instance—is distasteful to a person, you cannot annul by force or fear the law of his sensations; you can, indeed, compel him to eat it, but it is repugnant nevertheless, and yields no satisfaction to his taste; and if man, along the lower ranges of his nature, thus defies your insane attempt at compulsion, do you imagine that you can conquer him by the same method along the higher? If you cannot subjugate his body, the weak and perishable part of him, do you conceive that you can subdue his mind and soul, and the mighty and immortal faculties of his being?

Now God, inasmuch as he is our Creator, understands the structure and law of our minds, and never offers the least violence to their free exercise. Indeed, our independence is his glory; and the unforced, spontaneous character of our obedience and praise is what gives them the chief value in his sight. No, my friend, God will use no compulsion with you. He loads neither scale of the balance. You sit your throne of self-sovereignty in undisturbed possession. You are free in the exercise of your volition—free as God himself. Your salvation or damnation will be the result of your own voluntary act. Your feet are at the fork of two roads: the one is narrow and straight, and few there be that tread it, but those who walk it are walking for ever upward; the other is wide and crooked, and multitudes throng it, but those who wheel and rush along that populous road are going downward. Some of you, I say, stand at the fork of these divergent roads; and you are free, perfectly free, to enter either. Pause and reflect before you take your next step, for that may decide the entire journey. I wonder which path you are deciding to enter!

Have you ever thought how many weak things there are in the world? Look at the natural kingdom. How few are the oaks, and how many are the rushes! There is a rose, with a stem

so fragile as to almost break under the burden of its own blushing and fragrant bloom. Yet God is God of the reed and the rose. There is not a spire of grass bruised by the trampling foot; there is not a leaf fluttering from a twig; there is not a bird that flies nor a worm that crawls,—no, nor any order of created life,—so low and weak as to be beneath his care. Now look at man. Look at society in its component parts. Consider men and women as they live and move to-day. Are they strong or weak? Are they happy or sad? Are they joyful, or do they need comfort? Why, friends, I sometimes think that that there is no such thing as happiness in the world. So much disappointment, so much misery, so many hidden sorrows, so much concealed pain, so much studiously covered wretchedness, come to my knowledge, that I almost lose hope and heart at times, and feel like crying out: “Society is a vast charnel-house, where everything that is bright in hope or cheerful in expectation lies buried. Life is a monstrous disappointment, and death the only portal to peace.” There is not a day that passes in which virtue does not sell itself for bread; in which some poor, harrassed, or frenzied creature does not rush madly upon death; in which the good are not persecuted and the weak trampled upon. Behind windows you look at heedlessly, tragedies red as history or fiction ever painted are being acted, and faces you admire mask with smiles an inward torture worse than the agony of the rack. Who, even in this audience, has realized the fulfilment of his early hope? Whose life has not its mortifications, its bitter concealments, its studied evasions, its poignant humiliations, its wild uneasiness, its wrestlings and defeat? But we do not represent life; we represent only the fairest portions and the highest level of it. Below us are the great masses of humanity, and they writhe and moan and weep, they toil and starve and curse and fight and die. The world goes roaring on as heedless of those who fall as the gale in autumn is heedless of the leaves it strips from the tree, or the branches it wrenches away. But God is mindful of it all; he notes it all, and I would fain think that,

in the infinite resource of healing, is balm for all. "Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What a promise that is? He will not sell it to us, nor loan it to us: he gives it to us. And what a reach and stretch there is in the assurance, "Come unto me *all ye*"! It includes every one. Not the rich, not the refined, not the pure, but the poor and the coarse, the fallen and the weak; those who have been wrecked by others, and those who have wrecked themselves—*all* can have *rest*. Rest! Who gets rest in this life, outside of God? Whose mind gets rest? Whose soul gets it? Does the ocean get rest? Does the wind get it? Does the torrent find repose? Yes. For the ocean has its calms, and the wind lulls, and the torrent in summer ceases to roar; but the life of man is rougher than the sea, and fiercer than the wind, and more headlong than the torrent, and in himself man finds no rest, and no repose, and no season for repose, until the vault darkens over his head, and that long night with its dreamless sleep comes on. And God, sees all this and feels it all, and the beat of his sympathy is without intermission.

Now there are a great many things that tend to keep us from God, but nothing, no, nor all other hindrances put together, so much as wrong views of God. There is a girl whose virtue lies like a soiled and trampled flower, unable to lift itself. She cannot go to God, because her purity is gone. "God is white," she says, "and how can I go to whiteness?" There is a man of business, who will not be a Christian because he has no time. As if it took time to inhale the perfume of a bank of violets, when the wind blows it into your very face. Here is another down upon whose faith and hope and life a great blast of tribulation has swooped, and torn everything up by the roots, and prostrated all the growth of twenty years of religious education; and, standing over the grave or in the empty house, she wrings her hands, and cries out: "There is no God in the heavens, or if there is, he is hard and harsh and cruel, for he has taken from me my husband and all my children at one rude blow!" I met a man the other day who had lived like the prodigal; wasted the

substance of body and brain in riotous living. A magnificent wreck he was. A man who stood as I have seen a tree stand after a fire had swept through the forest—blasted and charred to the very core, all the life and vigour burnt out of it; yet keeping its magnificent girth and symmetry of proportion, even to the topmost bough. So that men stood. I took him kindly by the hand, and said, "Friend, there is hope in your future yet." He drew himself slowly up until he stood at his straightest, looked me steadily in the eye, and said, "Do you mean to say, Mr. Murray, that if I went to-night to God, he would pardon such a wretch as I?"

See how he misunderstood God! See how we all misunderstand him! Pardon! Is there any one he will not pardon? Is there a noisome marsh or stagnant pool on the face of the whole earth so dark, so reeking with rottenness and mire, that the sun scorns to shine on it? And is there a man so low, so heavy with corruption, so coarse and brutal, that God's love does not seek him out? How is the world to be redeemed if you put a limit to God's love? How is the great mass of humanity to be washed and lifted, if the thoughts of God are like our thoughts, and his ways like our ways? It is because he does not love as we do, because he does not feel as we do, because he does not act as we do, that I have any hope for my race,—that I have any hope for myself.

*A bruised reed he will not break.* Let our thoughts, like a song, close with the sweetness of the opening note. As those who, leaving home in winter, when all is bleak and drear, come back in spring to find the trees in blossom, and the earth exhaling odours, and everything more lovely than when they left; so I would call your minds back to the assurance of the Scriptures, the tenderness of God, and the opening thought of our discourse. This evening we have been permitted to meet in this place for worship. Let it stand in your remembrance as the expression of his love. This is the sabbath hour; let it be remembered as the hour in which so many of us worshipped and adored together. Are we strangers? No, we are friends, and

the day and audience warrant the word. The bitterness, the jealousies, the rivalries, the piques, the misconception to which life has exposed us, die out in our hearts as we sit here together ; a tenderness not unlike the tenderness of God steals into our bosoms. The throb of mutual sympathy, the lifting of common prayer, the aspiration for a higher life, bind us together. Who wishes ill to any ? None. Who remembereth ill done or ill received, save to forgive or ask to be forgiven ? Not one. We yield our hands to the clasp of a universal brotherhood, and our thoughts fly out in love toward the poor and the ignorant, the weak, the sinful, and the lowly, the world over. God pity them all ; and most of all we pray that he may use us to make his tenderness and mercy known to them.

And thus I commend you all to the tenderness of God. May the thought of it comfort you when you need comfort, and strengthen you when you need strength ! And when you shall meet at last face to face what men most dread, but which I do not doubt shall prove to many of you here your best friend, may the same tenderness be over you as the face of a mother is over her waking child. This earth is not our home. God is beckoning us onward. We shall depart. We shall pass into forgetfulness. We shall sleep. We shall be changed. Into what we know not ; but this we know, that we shall be satisfied when we awake in his likeness. What will that waking, what will that likeness, be ?

## LOVE IN DEATH.

BY REV. HORATIO N. POWERS.

*"Bury me with my fathers."*—GENESIS lxix. 29.

THERE is a wonderful naturalness in the delineations which the Bible gives us of our human characteristics, and, as we read what is said of those whose lives are portrayed on its sacred pages, we recognise continually the fidelity of the descriptions. Nothing is more marked in our humanity than the family relation, and some of the most touching and beautiful transcripts of it in all history are found in the Scriptures. Take the story of Joseph, with which you are all so familiar, and all through it are incidents and features which illustrate the household interests, the domestic feelings and sentiments, which were as sincere and tender then, in the infancy of the world, as now. The fact of this simple naturalness in the portrayal of what is human in the Bible is one of the evidences of its genuineness, and one reason of the powerful hold that it has upon the hearts of all generations. The sorrow of Jacob has a parallel in all paternal hearts that mourn over the loss of a beloved son. His reluctance to allow Benjamin to be separated from him, his clinging to the old associations of the household as age came upon him, his joy in the discovery of his long absent Joseph, his benedictions of his children, and his wishes and arrangements about his burial,—all speak of the deep

instincts and ineradicable feelings that are characteristic of the race, and which appear all along in the experience of those who live to see their children grow up around them. The ties of family are the strongest that we know. Such is the gracious ordination of Heaven, that those who are near of kin are bound together by deep and sacred affections. They live in each others' lives. They participate in what is best and noblest in each others' characters and companionships. The love of each other is one of the sources of their choicest happiness. It comes so in these relations that the mind instinctively associates with the beloved name whatever is most precious in this life, and whatever seems attractive and blessed in the life to come. For, where these home relations have been continued through a long period, there have inevitably been born, in joy and in sorrow, in labour and trial, in mutual cares and mutual successes, a series of experiences that have the deepest significance of all that the heart can know. There come a community of thought in the effort for the advancement and adornment of life, an appreciation of character in its more hidden sources and depth, a sense of the value of affectionate companionship and support, a knowledge of the rich and inviolable treasures which accumulate in mutual helpfulness, and the growth of the soul in sweetness and strength; a habit of trusting and consulting and communing together, which tends to bring lives into more profound unity, and lead them to think of the future as quite desolate if these relations should cease. The children that grow up in the household only deepen these attachments. All the service that is done for the preservation and the comfort and the welfare of those who are gathered at the board is a means of strengthening and purifying these affections. The very pains that are endured in ministering to the weak, in providing for the helpless, in all the exigencies of poverty and sickness and misfortune, are instrumental in exalting the sense of the preciousness of those who are thus dependent upon us. As persons in middle life or advancing age, who have children growing up around them, look back to the days of their infancy and youth, they appreciate, as never before, the value of parental



tenderness and care. Their parents seem clothed with a greater sacredness. They understand better than they did a mother's love, a father's solicitude, the sacrifices, the constancy of watchful assiduity, of those who guarded and taught them under the roof of home. With their experience of parental care and tenderness and affection they feel more deeply identified with those who gave them birth, and their gratitude and reverence are proportionally increased. Life is therefore strongly fastened backward in holy bonds, as well as projected forward in the hopes and affections that abide with the children of the household. The parent carries on with him not only the associations that are growing and strengthening daily in the circle about him, but the retrospection of a long past, when he was the subject of tender care and an incalculating friendship. And so, among the bright looks and cheerful voices of the young that are near him, he sees in memory the revered heads, the benignant faces that long ago bent over him, and hears the voices of wisdom and endearment that spoke in the years that are gone. However ardently he forecasts the future in the interests of the young, he feels bound very closely to an ancestry whose virtues he prizes more as he is more conscious of the solicitudes and responsibilities of his *own* position and influence. And as time goes on, and family history is made in the changes and joys and sorrows of home, the heart instinctively cherishes whatever has been most dear and valuable in experience. Jacob could not disassociate his love for Joseph from that of the mother of the boy, and he clung more fondly to Benjamin because his brother had vanished and Rachel was no more. In almost every family it happens that something is made to seem more sacred because it was prized and esteemed by a dear one who has gone—one on whom are centred a peculiar interest and affection, through some reason that the heart only can explain. There gets to be a profound feeling of identification with the object loved, so that life seems broken and imperfect without it. This taking into one's self the grief or affliction of another has illustration in those who came to the Saviour, asking for him to

have mercy on them, when they sought a cure for a dear child. And that gracious Redeemer never sent one such away unblest. He showed all through his divine ministry how sacredly he regarded these family relations. Born into a human family himself, he knew all that pertains to helpless infancy and hopeful and wondering youth. Whatever was holy and precious in home he learned in a real experience, and his life there with Mary and Joseph is invested with a heavenly charm. He wrought his first wonderful work at a marriage, consecrating these domestic ties with his presence. Mothers brought their children to him, and with his benediction life seemed gladdened to eyes that saw the evils in the world. It was some home that he was continually illuminating by his sympathetic presence, by his healing touch, by his consoling words, by a love that made life cheerful and brave. What evidence could be stronger of his appreciation of what is in a human heart than when he gave the widow of Nain her son, when he rejoiced the Syro-phenician woman with the cure of her daughter, when he sent the word of life to the officer at Capernaum, and when he brought Lazarus back to the desolate home in Bethany. Almost his last word ere he died in agony was to his mother. So, if anything is clear in the gospel, it is certain that the family ties are holy, and the instincts of the true heart, with reference to kindred, approved of heaven.

And it is natural to desire a continuation of these relationships. The patriarch Jacob, in his last request, says, "Bury me with my fathers;" and this feeling has illustration all along the ages in different races and climes. What is it but the outward symbol of that which is deepest in the heart? What is it but an expression of the preciousness of these earthly relationships? Bury me with my fathers. Of course in the grave, with silence and darkness, there is no device or knowledge. So far as the perishing bodies are concerned, it cannot matter essentially where they repose when the spirit has fled. And yet they are the tenements of thought and will. They are associated with all that is most expressive in our being.

With them are grouped the activities, the endearments, the acquirements, the possessions, that make up our estimate of life. When the patriarch said, "Bury me with my fathers," he thought of those whom he revered and loved, whose remains were lying in the sepulchre of Machpelah; he thought of the holy friendships that had consecrated and sweetened his years; and those forms of parent and wife and kindred seemed endued with life and feeling in the strong ardour of his soul. He wished to continue the relationship, and would sleep with those from whom he descended and loved. How natural is this sentiment, and how largely is the custom observed throughout the world! When we think of death and our place of burial, it is with thoughts of others who have gone before us. A lonely grave, a burial away from friends and kindred—remote, unvisited, neglected—brings sad thoughts. We cannot help shrinking from the picture that we make of it. To die alone, to be buried by strangers, to lie afar from any dust that once was dear, is not what we would prefer. But there where our ancestors repose, where parents are entombed, where sleeps the companion of our journey, or child, or sister, or brother, or beloved friend—there, too, we would be borne by tender hands, when we can tell none how kind they are. It is the same feeling that prefers those who love us to minister to us in our last hours, and perform the last offices that friendship can render. The human cries out of the darkness of death for the beloved presence, the heart that was true and kind. And if we can feel that when we are gone there will be any to follow us with sorrow to the grave, and there to plant some symbol of affection, and, as the days and years pass, to go aside sometimes and think of us as we were, with our friendship and faith, there comes a grateful emotion. There is something sweetly tranquillizing in the thought that we shall lie down with the family around us, the revered and good who closed their eyes long ago, and those who follow us out of the doors where we followed others who have gone; and that they shall bring the children one by one to sleep by our side. *All this is grateful to our thought, I say; and why? What*

could it mean if the heart did not reach onward to everlasting attachments, to life with the beloved beyond the grave ! And oh ! how dark would it be, when we come to face the dread necessity of death, were it not for the light that comes from the broken sepulchre of Christ ! What would be our hope without this victorious and mighty Saviour, who has put death under his feet ? Dear friends, here is an assurance, glorious and indubitable, that is given for everlasting comfort and strength. He who consecrated home while on earth, with all that could sanctify and sweeten it, prepares the heavenly home. He it is who shows the precious brotherhood of our humanity ; how that all the peoples and nations of the earth are one family in him ; that all are united as the children of our Father who is in heaven, and redeemed by his well-beloved Son. Oh ! the largeness of the divine grace, the preciousness of the divine disclosures ! We soon pass away. Our friends are passing on. The old family circle is more and more broken up. The dearest associations are sundered. We know very well that after a little the great world will go on, and we have no voice in all its affairs. And as we think of the graves that are green over so many that were dear, we say, "Bury me with my fathers," and bring others, that must follow after a while, to rest by my side. And yet our thoughts and our hearts go forward still to a rest where there is no weariness, and to a home that no cloud of sorrow shall ever darken. We want the light that never goes out—the joy that is full in our Father's house. But without Christ and his victory, what would be our hope ? Ah ! this blessed and mighty One has not only suffered for us, but overcome the grave. In his face is the radiance of immortality. He has opened wide the gates to the city where there is the need of no sun to shine into it, for the glory of God doth lighten it for ever. And yet none but the pure in heart may enter in. Washed in his righteousness, all are clean. Quickened and renewed in his love, life is lifted upward and enriched, and fitted for the felicities of the household of God. Oh ! what hope, *what strong assurance, may we have through him who is the*

first-born from the dead, the living, loving, victorious Lord. We do not go down to the dark valley as if it were the end. "The grave is the inn of the disciple on his way to the New Jerusalem," as said the great and good Dean Alford. His sleep is an awakening to peace and glory unutterable. For all the beloved in the Lord will Jesus bring with him—the little ones who just gave us their smile and vanished, and the earthly parent on whom we leaned so long, and the dear companion whose absence left a long, long sorrow—all who saw in the holy Jesus their friend and brother, and loved to look to him as better than all. Oh! to-day let us come gladly to celebrate the love of this Redeemer and Conqueror! Surely if there is a sweet light on our lives, it comes from him; and if there is a hope better than all others, he gives it; and if there is due a thanksgiving that should take our hearts and our all upward in adoring gratitude, and a spirit of tender and holy consecration, it is to him who taught us and washed us, and bids us follow him here in love, that we may live with him when all that is earthly and changing has passed away.

## THE FOLD AND THE SHEPHERD.

BY REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."*—JOHN x. 16.

**I**T very frequently happens in the life of Christ that he made the ordinary incidents of ordinary providence the vehicle in which to convey his instruction. Action and thought to him were spontaneous. He did not go out of his way to find occasion or illustration. He accepts the blind boy at the road side, or a lily at his feet. It is probable that he uttered the discourse contained in this chapter in the temple, or near the temple, where he and his hearers could see the folds which contained the sheep brought up for sacrifice. The keeper opened the door to the shepherd to whom the sheep belonged. Any other would have to climb over, and he would be but a thief and a robber. Him the sheep would not know, for the sheep—each fold—could know only the voice of its own shepherd. The Master points to those doors opening to the owner, and says, "I am the door. By me if any man entereth in he shall be saved." He points to the shepherd, and says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." The transition in thought here, from the shepherd to his giving his life for the sheep, is not unnatural, for those sheep themselves were all of them for sacrifice, and suggested to him the very mission upon which he had come—to give his life for the sheep. Then

the mind and heart of the Saviour stretch away beyond those folds and that narrowed Israel, to the flocks that were gathered in other lands—national walls built between—mountain prejudices dividing—but all of them his, and for which he was about to die, and then adds: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

The practice of sacrifice in religion is a practice the history of which begins with the history of the human race. That fact is worth observing. When Adam sinned he discovered his utter nakedness. Failure anywhere reveals our weakness. His bodily nakedness was but the shadow of a still greater nakedness. The skins of the beast which clothed him were his first lesson in the great fact he had to learn—that a covering and protection must come to him from a source which God in the nature of things had provided. The giving of life by the sacrifice was the first lesson in the fact that a life was to be "laid down" for the sins of the race. The knowledge resulting in the practice of sacrifice came to man either from intuition, which was nature's way of teaching, and so from God; or it came to him from reason, which was man's great weapon of defence, and so from God; or it came to him in some way which we call revelation, and so from God. Its adoption at all in religion, and its universality in adoption, make it impossible that it should have been the outgrowth of mere ignorance; or, even if it were, it betrays an instinct, and, as such, is still the shadow of some great fact, as all such instincts are. This sacrifice, this animal-slaying, this mere type, went out with man into all lands. There is not a religion (so called) in any nation without it. All its roots are in nature. The being in man is in this, as in all other cases, responsive to God's provisions in being beyond man. In proclaiming the sacrifice of Christ we do not bring him down to a level with the heathen, but we unearth the fact that, since the heathen have an inkling of the eternal plan of God, they are witnesses. Atonement is in nature—in highest intelligence and morality. Sacrifice is

the prime law of all creation. I have not time to trace that, though it would be worth while to do it. Especially is it the parent of all good. The mother makes a sacrifice for her child, the soldier for his country, the righteous for the wicked. Reconciliation with highest good is the one work of time for man, and sacrifice is the only road thereto. The richer the nature, the more capable of sacrifice. Only a rich nature can make a true sacrifice. God is the richest of all natures. He serves all, he saves all, his sacrifice is greatest of all.

When Adam was made, though he was the perfection of animals, he was a babe in intellect and morals. He was incapable of a pure thought. It was needful to teach him as we teach children. Some men have not yet gotten over that necessity. A sign language was necessary. Soon this was capable of development. Hence, this shadow sacrifice has a history. The Mosaic dispensation was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.

The narrowing of the sacrificial history to the Jewish nationality did not exclude other nations from their share of the benefits contained in the ultimate sacrifice. The Jewish nationality had nothing in it to make it a favourite of God. God can never be a partizan in any such narrow sense as that. The human race was his offspring, and he loved one part as much as the other. He employed the Jews as part and parcel of the type system itself—a thing hitherto not sufficiently remembered. As the race divided in the beginning, part retaining some knowledge of the true God, and part going off to their own inventions, so the Hebrews afterwards divided. As there were Jew and Gentile, so there were Judah and Israel. As God designs respecting Judah and Israel, so God designs respecting Jew and Gentile. The Jew being a type gives catholicity to the promise. The promises made to the Jews are made to them as representatives of the race; through them to the race. All these expectations which look for a literal fulfilment of the promises to the Jews as a people are extremely short-sighted. The prophets themselves—those wonderful men,



who seem to have towered above all that was temporary and sectional, tell us as much. Josiah says: "Neither let the son of the stranger who hath joined himself to the Lord say, the Lord hath utterly separated me from his people; for thus saith the Lord: Even unto him will I give in my house and within my wall a place, and a name better than of sons and of daughters. Even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted upon my altar, and my house shall be called a house of prayer for all people. The Lord God, who gathereth the outcasts of Israel, saith: Yet will I gather others to him beside those that are gathered unto him." Words that seem almost identical with those of the Saviour himself: "Other sheep I have," &c. The prophet Ezekiel says: "The word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Take thee one stick, and write upon it for Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions; then take another stick, and write upon it for Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions; and join them one to another in one stick, and they shall become one in thy hand; and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one nation upon the land of the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all; and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all,"—words that are, as it were, an echo of these very words of Christ: "And there shall be one fold under one shepherd," "mountains of Israel," "one king," "no more two nations," "divided into two kingdoms no more for ever!" What is all that but a vision of the heritage which all the ages have pledged us? That is "our own land," the distant Canaan which the Lord our God hath given us. The whole plan of God works together. It is the history of sacrifice; the promise made in that history; the coming of Christ to fulfil it; which to me is a proof of the atonement fully convincing

and altogether invincible. We see God with the race—God in all time, God never leaving nor forsaking, always teaching, moulding, never placing his power in man, or in shadow, but employing man and shadow to bring humanity to himself.

If we inquire what the sacrifice which Christ made really was, what its purpose was, all sacrifice and all prophecy grow transcendently luminous. We have become very widely habituated to the thought that the sacrifice Christ offered was the act of dying upon the cross. Few men comparatively are prepared yet to take a much wider view. The fact is, the shedding of blood, the giving of life, was only the culmination of the sacrifice, the climax of perfection. So far even Christ's sacrifice was also typical, meant to tell us that a true sacrifice must be to the very utmost of which circumstances will admit. The sacrifice of Christ was all that is embraced in thirty-three years of being upon earth—from the manger to the Ascension. What do those years not embrace? If we should set aside all questions as to Christ's deity, and think of him as of a being of transcendent excellence, I cannot conceive of a greater sacrifice than for such a being to sojourn with such a people as the Jews, merely for the purpose of doing them good, of giving them thoughts becoming manhood, of building up in them the kingdom of knowledge and virtue. To sit there contending even with his own disciples, when he might have been quiet and enjoying his own being, is an act of the greatest possible mercy. To sit there and instruct—the instruction itself being of a sort vital to our well-being—is itself a revelation of God. It is a revelation of absolute goodness. To do it when nothing could be gained by it but death and ignominy; to go through death and ignominy to prove he could do it; to do it in order to show us the majesty of our moral being—the glory of moral action; to teach us what a true sacrifice is, is itself a sacrifice beyond which we cannot conceive a greater, or conceive anything more glorious. Such a sacrifice was in all respects worthy of God. The very manner in which it was made appeals to our moral instincts, and contains in itself a redeeming efficacy.

It enthrones moral being. Moreover, the sacrifice of Christ convinced us that God, the best of beings, had no enmity against us—for aught we know the worst of moral beings; convinced us that the best of all beings was our best of all friends; proved to us that God absolutely had nothing that he treasured against us, but only longed for us to come to him in love, and be in deed and truth his children. That sacrifice took away—cancelled all sin in itself. I do not pretend to know how. I do not think man knows how that was, any more than he knows how creation was. But in that sense of proving God, reconciled to us, there was atonement—at-one-ment. That was a revelation to us—a demonstration. Man could not henceforth doubt that God was reconciled to all men, and only wanted all men reconciled to him. A great partition wall was broken down. That was another part of that sacrifice. It not only broke down all partition walls, making one commonwealth of the race, instead of simple Israel, but it revealed the only difference that ever had been or ever could be between men—the difference between holiness and unholiness. It showed us what a reconciliation to God must be—not a name, but a fact; what a glory there was in it; and what the road was by which we must all attain it. Jesus Christ was the typical man. As all ages told of him, so he told of all future ages. We see in him what this race shall become. We see in him how man is to become that. Jesus Christ is the expression of what God meant by “his Holy Mountain,” of which the prophets spake. Jesus Christ is the expression of what God means by burnt offerings and sacrifices. When he says that the offerings and sacrifices of the nations shall be accepted on his altar, he means not that he will accept their old shadows and ordinances, their abominations, but that they shall learn of him and bring sacrifices and offerings such as his altars demand. The life of Christ shows us how God loves mercy, rather than sacrifice; and how it is mercy—love which is the annihilation of self—love which leads to all knowledge and blessing, and to the giving of all knowledge and blessing to all men—which is the sacrifice God desireth. This has been the

use of God in all the ages—this the purpose of God in all nations—to bring men to holiness, to the culture and best exercise of all he is, to be just what Christ was. For this whole world has been groaning and travailing. This is the house of prayer for all people, the prophets foretold. This is the fold of which Jesus speaks.

These words of Christ, to-day, are a sublime prophecy, a rich precious promise—"There shall be one fold under one shepherd;" man joined all together and ruled over by God; he our father, and we a family; he loving us all, and we loving one another; peace on earth and good-will among men.

Now, I do not wish to be indefinite here, or to be misunderstood.

When I think of Christ, when I view him, as he is in the Gospel, I see him in two prime relations. One as an expression of God to us, and one as an expression of man to God. I thus see him as God and man. As an expression of God to us, he is an expression of goodness; he is an expression of high law—of spirit; *i.e.*, of that which is not arbitrary, but fixed—high, glorious and eternal. He is a reflection of the most exalted being—of the exercise of perfect and eternal principle. He is a standard, not of the animal, but of the intellectual and moral—of pure love, of pure mind, of love in action. He is the assertion that "God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all." That incarnation says to every human being, God is your father; God is love. Then, as a man, subject to all mortal contingency—in a condition far below the angels; in a condition, indeed, beyond which we cannot conceive of greater trial and disadvantage—his life expresses a perfect conformity to moral law. He is moral law in action. His obedience to every instinct of goodness of which we have any conception. Every part of our being finds there its full and glorious development. That life is a consistency, a unit—simple, unequalled; in spirit, transcendent; in action, glorious. There is any freedom from bodily infirmity, it is there. If there is any grandeur in intellectual vigour, it is there. If there is any beauty in moral perfection, it is there. If this being involves

the possession of multiplied powers—of varied relations, civil, social, domestic—of complicated providences—we find them all harmonious in Christ. If faculties, relations, and providences simply self-denial and sacrifice, we see in him not only that self-denial and sacrifice are not contrary to goodness, but directly of its essence—at once cause and effect. If faculties, relations, and providences imply a progress in knowledge, in subjection of self to wisdom; an end of ignorance, strife, and sin—a perfection of society—in short, a perfection in man—we find it all in Christ. We see in him manhood, restored to, reconciled with, an omnipotent God. He came here to tell us who and what God is. Being here, he tells us what the perfect man is. Having been here to tell us of God, he went back to his father to tell God of us. He stands in the majesty of a perfect manhood, having kept all law; “making intercession for us;” pleading with omnipotence to delay and wait, till this race shall be restored to the perfection of his likeness. This is Christ, God and man. Thus does he bring God to us. Thus does he take us up to God.

This likeness of Christ, this knowledge of law, this exercise of love, this harmony of being, this practice of truth and holiness, this reconciliation to God, this happy perfection of man, is the fold into which all men are to be gathered. There is not and there never was any other fold. All that have not been in it, all that are not in it, are and have been outside the fold. But the words of Christ are the promise, of which his sacrifice—*i.e.*, his incarnation—is the pledge, “There shall be one fold under one shepherd.” This whole race shall be brought to God. “These, also, I must bring,” says the Saviour. The church of God—the church of Christ—therefore is not an accidental organization, like the Jewish nation—not a little fold, built about by human fences, or temporary things that human weakness calls divine. It is not an artificial organization, depending upon the accident of birth, of temperament, of association; but the church of Christ is a broad, deep, eternal faith—a system comprehensive of

eternal truth ; a high, wise, and holy life ; a being glorious, and a giving of oneself in sacrifice, as Jesus did, that all men may become noly. The only local temple the faith has is the human heart. The extent of the church of Christ upon earth is precisely the extent of virtue, of peace, of truth—truth of any sort or degree, for the kingdom of truth alone is the kingdom of God. The extent of the church of Christ upon earth is precisely the extent of real well-being in the human race. All else is tinsel, and mere sign language. None are in or can enter the true fold, but they who hear the voice of Jesus ; and none hear that but they who follow him, who are daily transformed into his likeness, and are an agency for bringing in that day herein foretold, when there shall be one fold and one shepherd. If you and I have not given ourselves in sacrifice, we have not touched our nobler nature, and know not yet a true faith. We are not believers in Jesus, and need to pray, “ Lord, help my unbelief.”

Now, I think it is of vital importance that we all attain to this idea. In such a view how do all our sects and isms dwindle down ! How here does Christ become still a living being, present with his church, speaking to it in his word ! How is every man instantly our brother, and our work instantly a definite and glorious action, just where we are, and under any conditions, to which it has pleased God to call us, to cultivate ourselves, to bear with our neighbour and try to cultivate him ! How it raises civilization ahead of us, pure, perfect, holy, our destined haven ! How ignorance dies, and vice ends, and jails are given to moles and bats, and every knee and every heart bows to the name of Christ ! How it elevates all men into a divine brotherhood ; no nationality, no sectarianism, no petty ends ! If one is more unfortunate than another, how that fact instantly makes him a candidate for our warmest and highest offices of love ! How it gives every man a hope—a chance for the exercise of every sympathy and faculty of his being, whether he belongs to a church or not ! How it opens to you, my brother, of *whatever shade of faith you may be*, the possibility of your coming

back to God, by your coming back to Jesus! How it tells you what it is to come back to him; not to call him Lord, but to do what he says; to build as he showed us how; to be as he showed us being. Verily, there is no name given under heaven whereby man must be saved, but the name of Jesus. How this shows us how Jesus is the Saviour in that he saves his people from their sins! In this view how unnatural are those pretensions we set up to superiority—those claims to priority! How impossible is that unity in dead forms men think this world is to reach in their sect; and how undesirable, even if attainable.

It seems as if in the ages past and in this present age, we have not been preaching what Jesus was—what Jesus is—a Saviour for this world—so much as putting salvation in the dim future and some other world, we know not where. We have not been preaching what he wants us to be: not been preaching Christ and Christ crucified, so much as preaching our little folds, other and stranger shepherds. If that be so, no wonder the sheep have not heard our voice. Man wants something deeper and something stronger than petrefaction and organization. We have not been preaching sacrifice—the sacrifice we see in Jesus—as the road to bring us to God. Actions speak louder than words. As a consequence, we see our folds filled more or less, but in them all no sacrifice—millions upon millions are yet unredeemed. They lie in ignorance, in want of all good. Millions upon millions do not know there has been a Saviour, a true shepherd. He gave himself a sacrifice for us all, and if there is any way in which he can be offered over again, it is only as he is offered in your heart and mind—going to carry him a sacrifice to bring our brother to him. It is true, God works by human agency, but do we not rely too much upon artificial agency—do we not delegate our powers and neutralize them? We do not realize that individuality is at last the ultimate agency. If we could realize that all our organizations are but so many separate agencies for helping us, and not for hindering us, so many tools to work with, they would become ~~tenfold~~ **tenfold more efficient than they are.** With our present notions,

what are we doing? Sitting complacently within our folds, at best but repairing our fences, as much to keep out all that are out as to keep in all that are in. Denouncing sect, and yet each one but the more sectarian. I cannot sympathize with that sentiment which pretends to shudder at what we call infidelity, and yet can look with complacency upon ignorance and vice and crime and pauperism, and with more complacency as they attain to greater proportions. I believe that all good is of God; and while I would that every man could come and see Jesus, and acknowledge him, yet if he has what was in Jesus in any degree, I can be thankful and pray to God in hope and faith that he shall have more. When John sent to ask the Master whether he were the true Messiah, the Saviour healed the sick, fed the hungry, cured the lame and blind, gave tongue to the mute, and preached the Gospel to the poor. That was his answer to John—as much as to say, is not this just what this poor world wants? Can I be anything but God, if I bring it just the good it needs? If I did not, would I be a Saviour? Many Johns are asking now, where is the true church—where is Christ? We cannot say the poor have the Gospel preached to them; that the devils are cast out of this world; that the dead in trespasses and sins are raised to life again. We want more sects, I think. At any rate, one more: one to go and do the will of God; one to reclaim mankind and heal our woes; one to rejoice in the truth; one, every member of which shall bring out the highest expression of himself, and that a high expression of Christ; one, to offer sacrifice as Jesus did, to be like him, in giving life a ransom for others. In our sectarianism we are but converting men from one sect to another. And, truly, to what profit? Suppose all the shepherds in one county induce all the sheep from another county to come over to them, are there any more sheep? Suppose you and I are teachers, and you take all my scholars, is there any more knowledge? Suppose we should all belong to one church to-day, would there be any more Christians? Or, if we convert from the world at all, we convert *to sectarianism rather than to Christ.* We Christians have made a



mistake. Our prevailing conception of the spread of the Gospel is the idea of conversion. The fundamental thought of Christ is that of building. There is not a faculty in man which the Gospel does not recognise. One consequence of our error is, that a great amount of faculty is prevented, and a much greater amount is latent, dormant, "tied up in a napkin." Opportunity which ought to employ our talent is withering, perishing. Educational forces are neglected. God would have us begin and lay foundations, where and when they ought to be laid; not on narrow, sectarian bases, but on broad and catholic principles, in purely Christian spirit. In our error the church force does not develop as fast as world force. I do not wonder men stand up in their pulpits, and tell us "Protestantism is a failure." Any ism will be a failure. There is but one thing incomprehensible in those men, and that is the blindness which can recommend us, in a body, to adopt Romanism, as if that were the greatest success upon earth; as if that which claims to be catholic were not the narrowest of all things, the one thing supremely needing conversion. But, brethren, Christ hath not left his sheep; God is moving. There is now approaching another advent; such an advent as has not been for at least three hundred years. To narrow God down to our sects and isms would be only to degrade ourselves. God will not permit it. His work is the same it has always been, to bring us to himself; and all the work of the ages shall not have been in vain. We are like the two disciples who wanted the places of honour; God will not be content with such low rivalry. He is telling us once more, we must be baptized with the baptism Christ was baptized with. We must drink of the cup Christ drank of. This valley of dry bones is not to continue for ever. Bone is to come back to bone, joint to socket, and all clothed in power and true life. There is the promise—"They shall hear. There shall be one fold and one shepherd." Men do hear that voice. There are men and women whose hearts are bowed, and whose hearts would break, were it not that that promise is there: "*I am with you.*" All exertion shall not be in vain. We all

*Reverend H. C. W.*  
need to hear it, because we all need a true faith—faith in God, faith in Christ, faith in that blessed day which God has promised, when our woes shall be ended, and man shall be what Jesus was. God is speaking. All the signs of the times call upon us to wake, to put on the whole armour of God. Some of us shall fall short of the glory that remains, just as the Jews fell short of that first glory. Is it you? Is it I? That it might not be, let us all awake and seek new light from Christ. Let us seek a higher comprehension of him, of our life, of our destiny; that so we may be not only within the eternal fold ourselves, but agents, co-workers with God, in bringing the promised day, when there shall be “one fold and one shepherd.”

## CHRISTIANITY AND DOGMA.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

*"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."*—JOHN vii. 17.

CHRIST uttered these words just after he had unfolded what seemed to him great doctrines in religion; and fearing lest the multitude might suppose he was only uttering sudden human conceptions, after the fashion of the walking philosophers, or raving sybils, he informed them that if they would practise his teachings they would discover them to be great laws of God. I have read this declaration of Christ not so much because it suggests how mankind may determine which doctrines are true, but also what truths are worthy of being honoured with the name of a doctrine of God. The truth of an idea, and the value of an idea, are two different things, and this text is announced because it submits to us a method of learning not only the truth of propositions, but the relative value of propositions. If mankind can learn by experience what doctrines come from God, then the lawful inference is, that the great doctrines of Christianity are open to the test of this human experience; and further, that those propositions which are beyond the reach of man's daily life were not in Christ's mind when he discoursed to men upon the way of salvation.

This theme of remark is rendered appropriate in these days  
— *the wonderful amount of complaint which is heard upon all*

sides against dogma, and by the almost equal amount of defence which dogma receives at the hands of the champions of formal theology. The fashionable cry of the worldling is, "I cannot accept so much dogma;" and the reply is rather too fashionable in some quarters, "He is a rationalist, a poor infidel." At least we have come to days when the complaint against dogma is loud and long. It is possible that much of this war of words comes from a conflicting use of terms, that the sceptical generally mean by "dogma" certain accidents of Christianity, and seldom the cardinal principles of religion; while the theological minds understand by "dogma" all the doctrines of their faith, and hence rashly use the word "infidel" regarding many who are as near as themselves to the form and soul of Jesus Christ. It will generally be found, upon conversing with these enemies of dogma, that they are thinking of the decrees of the church more than of any of the great laws of Christianity; and instead of gazing at the Son of God and of man, are entangled amid the blue laws of New England, or the hundreds of deliverances of the councils of the Protestants and old Catholics. Often when the German free-thinking young man is declaiming against dogma he is thinking only of the Puritan Sabbath and of the hostility of the church to his drinks and recreation.

That there is a vast amount of opposition to the whole of Christianity and religion is painfully true; but there is also a vast amount of ill-will developed by, and exhausted upon, ideas that have come from men rather than from God, or at least have been expanded by sectarian force into a significance far beyond the warrant of Infinite Wisdom. When we remember that there was a time—and perhaps that time includes the present practice—when some branches of the Scotch Church had run the number of their decrees up into the thousands; and when we remember what attitudes our home denominations have taken regarding amusements, or music, or street-cars on Sunday, or dress, or psalmody, or communion, or immersion, we ought to feel that a wicked world may often speak disrespectfully of dogma without being either deficient as to common sense, or

hopeless as to religion. If our Protestant world does not furnish us with adequate illustration of what the world generally means by dogma, we can look across at the Roman Catholic spectacle, and see in their immaculate conception and infallibility and real presence, specimens of the kind of doctrine which the much-deceived world has at last come so greatly to fear. Not only for the wicked world's sake, but for the church's own sake, for its growth in greatness of mind and in happiness, it should make such distinction between the fundamental laws of religion, which may be tried by experience, and the notions which are wholly beyond such a test, as to free itself from the necessity of expelling a man who sings a human composition, or of withholding fellowship from those who may not have been immersed, or who may not have enjoyed the hand of a bishop upon their forehead. While such things are constantly transpiring, we need not wonder if a wise age, looking on, says, not "We are weary of religion," but "We are weary of dogma." Unless by dogma the complaining world means the accretion which has been cast upon the shores of the church by the turbulent sea of debate and sectarian interest, its fault-finding has no logical basis. After a man or a handful of men have conceived the idea of rallying around some notion, such as immersion, or decrees, or ability, or inability, that notion soon comes to represent capital, and pastorates, and schools, and seminaries, and publications, and holds then all the power of an empire *de facto*. It must be against these church governments founded in the *coup d'état* of individuals that the outside multitude is aiming its chief assault, for that men of intelligence should declaim against doctrine in Christianity is beyond belief. As none of these cultivated sceptics come to nature and ask her to produce a floral world without any laws of rain, and soil, and sunshine, so they certainly do not come in their rational moments to Christianity, and require that the vast world of its morals and spirituality shall grow up without possessing any laws of cause and effect. Does the boasting, rationalism become supernatural at last, and

expect the realm of virtue and piety to come from nothing, and depend upon nothing, and possess no possible order of sequence? We conclude otherwise, and submit the proposition that no man can preach Christianity without being a doctrinal preacher, and no man can acquire a Christian or a religious heart, except by the obedience of doctrine. Doctrine sustains the same relation to Christian character and hope that mechanical law sustains to the cathedral of St. Paul, or that the law of sound sustains to the church chimes, or the music of the many-voiced organ. The attempt to separate Christianity in any way from its own announced doctrines is as pitiable a weakness as it would be to invite engineers to bridge a vast river by emotional action, wholly separate from any creed of mechanics.

Having reached the inference that Christianity is founded upon doctrine, that doctrines are its state laws, and that all preachers must be doctrinal preachers, and all Christians doctrinal Christians, let us look now into the quality of these doctrines which all must teach and obey. When we shall have found these, we shall have escaped the thing which the wicked world fears or suspects—a group of human dogmas supporting some church *de facto*, secured by a usurpation in some dark night, and shall have found what the wicked world ought to love—a church *de jure*, founded by the Almighty, and sanctioned by the longings of the soul, and by the experience of all generations. In seeking for these doctrines we may permit Christ—the Founder of Christianity—to supersede reason, and point out a path for his followers.

But the moment he has uttered our text—that “Those which men can subject to experience are the doctrines that be of God,” reason rises up and unites its voice with that of simple authority. The doctrines of Christianity are those which may be tried by the human heart. This is declared often in the Divine Word. From the words of Solomon, “Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man,” to the Saviour’s words of the text; from the psalm, “O taste and see that the Lord is good,” to the deeply spiritual passage where Christ compare

himself to bread to be eaten by the soul, there is one prominent idea—that the doctrines of religion are those which can be converted into spiritual being, making the spirit advance from childhood to the stature of Christ. With such a measuring line in the hand it would seem easy for any one to discover which are the great laws of Christianity, and what are only the facts or alleged facts of the religion. The difference between a fact and a law is perfectly obvious, but yet it is often necessary to remind mankind of things that are obvious. For example, singing of psalms and immersion may have been actual facts of the Bible times. It is most probable immersion was the fact of the New Testament, and yet neither of these facts can be made a church law or a church doctrine, because it is not possible for human experience to distinguish here, and to taste and see that the Lord is any more truly good through immersion than through sprinkling, or through a psalm of David than through the Christian hymns of Wesley or Watts. In the great empire of experience it is the spirit in the baptism or in the song only which can so much as exist, and hence it is the worshipful spirit alone which becomes a part of religion's great law. But when the Bible says, "He that believes shall be saved," it unfolds a doctrine; for human experience, taking up this faith, is wholly transformed thereby, as a desert is transformed by rains and sun into a paradise. Faith is man's relation to Christ, just as the student's love of knowledge is his relation to all study and wisdom. Faith is the union between the cluster and the vine, between the rose and the nourishing earth. Separate the rose, and it withers—never reaches its bloom. Hence he that believeth not is damned, because, the chain that should have bound him to God being broken, his moral world sinks and goes out in the darkness, like the virgin's oilless lamp when the joy of the marriage feast was near. If God is the life of the world, then the soul that separates itself from him by unbelief would seem to have broken the chain of perpetual being. Hence some infer the annihilation of the wicked, others their loss of happiness, rather than of existence. Be the details what they may,

faith is not a doctrine like that of immersion or of decrees, an idea beyond appreciation; but is one which, like the law of food and drink, lies wholly within the daily life of the soul. Such also are the ideas of repentance and conversion, and of a mediatorship, and of the divineness of Christ. These cannot, except by the most thoughtless or else the most unjust, be counted as dogmas in the contemptuous sense, for they are seen at once to be phases of human experience—forms of its daily life, of its regrets, of its reforms, of its confidence, of its hopes. A world which demands of men apology when insult is offered; a public reason which asks that a political rebel shall become penitent, and shall become converted as to the national flag, ought not to banish penitence and conversion from the empire of God, that great fatherland of the soul.

Appealing, therefore, to the range of human experience, we must declare faith, repentance, and conversion to be unavoidable laws of Christianity, not having come into it by any council of Catholics or Protestants, but direct from God, who poured into the human mind its reason, and into the heart its love. Not so easily can we persuade Reason to admit, as a matter of public experience, the idea of a Mediator. We waive the inquiry as to Reason's voice, because we are seeking not what the public confesses, but what Christianity itself holds, that may perchance be a matter of experience, may be "tasted," and thus be seen to be good. Under this head of doctrine open to experience, we must include the notion of a Mediator, for we find millions of hearts glad in the feeling that there is a daysman between them and God. Millions who have passed away, have gone, after a joyful life in this Mediator, to a peaceful death in him. The hymns of many ages, from the tombstones of the Christian catacombs, where a few sweet words were written, to the "Lamb of God, I come, I come," of our century, the experience of man as to the idea of a Mediator has rolled along like Dante's vast bird-song over the forest of Chiassi. When we sing the hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul," or "*Rock of ages, cleft for me,*" and look into the faces of



those borne upward by this sentiment, we know that this idea of a Mediator belongs to human experience, and hence is to be enrolled among the doctrines of any true Christianity.

Let us approach, now, a more warmly disputed proposition, that the divineness of Christ is something essential in the Christian system. The Trinity, as formally stated, cannot be experienced. Man has not the power to taste the threeness of one, nor the oneness of three, and see that it is "good." Man cannot "do his will" here, and "know of the doctrine whether it be from God." It is not conceivable that any one will pretend to have experienced three persons as being one person—the same in substance, and, at the same time, equal. This doctrine, therefore, belongs to a simple religion of fact, and not to one of experience; and hence the distance between that idea and the idea of faith or penitence is the difference between a fact and a perpetual law. But while human experience cannot approach the Trinity, it can approach the divineness of Christ; for if Christ be not divine, every impulse of the Christian world falls to a lower octave, and light and love and hope alike decline. There is no doctrine into which the heart may so inweave itself and find anchorage and peace as in this divineness of the Lord. Hence, Christianity bears readily the idea of three offices, and permits the one God to appear in Father, or in Son, or in Spirit; but when the divine is excluded from Christ, and he is left a mortal only, the heart, robbed of the place where the glory of God was once seen, and where the body was once seen rising from the tomb, and where the words were spoken, "Come unto me, ye that labour and are heavy laden," is emptied of a world of light and hope. The doctrine of "our Lord" in the New Church, which makes the Son of Man the place in the universe where the glorious presence of God becomes visible like the colours of the sun dissolved in the sunset; the doctrine of the mystical pantheist, that Christ overflows like a cup of golden wine too full, will always be holier in usefulness than any being coming up in the *garments of only a poor mistaken hermit, of common poverty*

mon frailty. There is now a hymn, popular in the  
ist Church, at least, which begins with this line :—

“Follow me, the Lord is saying;”

is still more popular hymn,—

“Thee will I love, my joy, my crown,  
Thee will I love, my Lord, my God;  
Thee will I love beneath thy frown,  
Or smile beneath thy chastening rod;”

which were written by a mystical pantheist, who was  
a his conception of Christ as the place where the Deity  
campment for the joy and guidance of man. In presence  
experience, to make Christ only a frail human is to  
Christianity in its heart's life; and hence among the  
aws of the Christian religion, selected by the measure-  
our text, we must include the divineness of our Lord.  
result of the principle here given, that the doctrines of  
unity are such as may be tried by experience, hundreds  
; the world calls dogmas are excluded from any enumera-  
essentials, and must stand only among the facts, or  
facts, of Christian history, and not among religion's  
life and salvation. God does not ask you to taste the  
s, nor to experience that which lies beyond sight or  
but to cast yourself into the laws of faith, and con-  
, and repentance, and love, and hope, and of the Divine  
nd upon these be carried by a new, recreative experience  
, a new world called a new heart here—called heaven  
er. If we base our religion upon a revelation, we must  
it not only the existence of a doctrine, but the relative  
f a doctrine. We need not go to the Bible for a truth,  
man for an estimate of the value of the truth. The  
ative value of a truth is to be learned from the guide  
retends to lead the human race. For example, if the  
e of faith plays a more prominent part in the Bible than

the doctrine of infant baptism, such also will be the order their usefulness; and if the three offices of God, as Father and Redeemer and Spirit, are made more prominent than the idea that these three persons are one God, then what mankind will need most, and use most, will be the three influences, God as Father, God as Saviour, God as Holy Spirit; and what he may make secondary is the enigma of the three in one; for why make prominent things which are not conspicuous in the inspired guide? By this estimate of Christianity, illustrated in this discourse, you who are afar off and unwilling to come nearer to this Saviour may at least find a method of discriminating between a church weighed down by a hundred declarations, and that simple religion of Christ which announces but few laws, and those all measurable by your own experience. Two hundred years ago, a pietist left the world this couplet,—

“Lutherans, Papists, Calvinists abound;  
But, tell me, where are Christians to be found?”

The answer is easy, if any one will take as a guide the words of Christ, which limit the doctrines to those which the soul can taste. A thousand sects may all be Christian if, far away from their Papacy or Calvinism, the myriad hearts are daily living amid those doctrines of experience which are few in number, but which are the modes of life—the soil and rain and sunshine of religion’s flowery fields. If you, my friend, are giving your daily thought to the facts of Christianity, and are standing bewildered to-day amid the statements of science and Genesis about earth, or its swarms of life, recall the truth that your soul cannot taste any theory of man’s origin—cannot experience the origin of man, whatever that origin may have been; but when you come to the law of love to man, and to the highest self-love, then you have come to a realm all responsive to your touch—a realm beyond the reach and inquiry of science, and the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Thus turning from only events to the laws of Christianity, you will find in faith *and love and hope*, and in the presence of a Divine Lord, a

world that will every year yield thee such a harvest of virtue and joy as nothing else can ever bring. Oh, sceptical friend ! oh, Christian, too ! fly each day from the debate over simple events or entities in religion, to the laws of being that may be tasted like sweet fruit, and which confess themselves at once to belong to the nature of God and man. It is in this realm of experience the millions of earth become one. From this sea of feelings the spirits of men rise to heaven from every shore ; like golden mist, up from it ascended the form of Enoch and the chariot of Elijah, Magdalen and John ; up from this living wave went the dark African, and the Catholic and the Protestant martyrs, and lifted by these arms of a sweet experience our children, who have wholly escaped religion's isolated ideas, rise both in life and death toward God, the immortal trophies, not of dogmas, but of the laws of faith, and love, and worship.

## THE UNION OF MORAL FORCES.

BY REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."*—LUKE ii. 14.

AS a matter of history this verse is exceedingly interesting. It shows us how the birth of our Redeemer was celebrated. Heaven recognized the magnitude of the event, and through its representatives congratulated the earth. Toward God the attitude of heaven was that of praise—praise of his love and wisdom and power; toward the earth it was one of sympathy and felicitation. The angels appreciated the value of that birth to man, and predicted the era of universal peace and good-will. In this the angels only expressed what the Scriptures everywhere confirm, what Christ loved to say of himself, what the prophets said of him from the beginning, what the apostles wrote and John foresaw. If ever peace was made visible in outward form, it was in the person of our blessed Lord; if ever good will to man found expression, it did in the life and teachings of Christ; and whether you look at the influence of his deeds or his nature, we can in very truth assert that "of his peace there is no end."

Previous to Christ there was no peace, either in principle or expression, among men. War was the normal condition and practice of mankind. The strong ruled the weak. The world was divided into two classes, oppressors and slaves. Wrong had become systematized. Civil government, which should be

tain of peace, was a source of war ; and nations were as animals that have no law but their appetites and their . Men in their individual relations were antagonistic and

Humane impulse had not been born. Brotherly love, as the stock and race, was unknown. The Jew hated the ile, and the Gentile retaliated on the Jew. Even religion animosities, and men inspired by it became cruel and rse.

w, Christ came to change all this, and the angelic heralds proclaimed his mission. He came to introduce a new and r order of life and feeling, to awaken the dormant power mpathy in man, to bridge the chasm of hatred which ad nations and races, and bring them at last to the acknow- ient and practice of universal brotherhood.

propose to discuss the subject of peace and good will g men, and the result to which they would lead. I

omit the national relations of it, although they are y of attention. God works up through the individual e nation, and through one nation to all nations. This is w, the drift and tendency of his administration, and I have ubt but that eventually all differences between nations be settled by friendly arbitration, and not as now by the l. But I must pass this point by. I wish to notice, ie first place, the personal and church relations of the ct, and remark upon the cheering progress which is ; made toward union of all moral forces in society, and the onizing of all differences which provoke discord and enmity. idly, I shall allude to the relation of this principle to us as idual Christians, and show how and when we shall find

w, any one who observes the present state of things about ust see that the good are not united as the bad are. Evil . coherence, a unity, a oneness of purpose and combination rgies, to which goodness has not as yet attained. The ad all pull one way, and they pull with all their might. edness is always unanimous, and self-collected, and at

peace with itself. The devil never rejects any help, come from what source it may. He welcomes direct and he welcomes indirect assistance also. Whatever can debauch men, whatever can lead them astray, whoever will assist him by little or by much, is accepted and enrolled among his forces. By this process, by thus utilizing every agent and agency, he is enabled to accomplish vast results, and keep his seat and throne in the world. It is not so with the good. They have not as yet learned the lesson of combination, the power which lies in organization and unity of effort. If a man or organization is half wrong, Satan utilizes that half, and works it in somehow to advance his schemes of mischief; but if a man or organization is only half good, good men stand off, and look askant at it, and say: "No, we cannot affiliate with that; we must not have anything to do with it, lest we are misunderstood, lest we hazard our influence." And so the sum total of correct influence in society is lessened.

The good are thus divided and separated, one from another; differences are perpetuated, and union and peace deferred. You may take this city for an illustration, and it supplies us with a good one too. Here lines are drawn, and one class of power stands on this side, and another on that. One man says, "This view of God is the true view," and will have nothing to do with another who disputes it. And so it comes about that we are fighting evil here in companies and squads, and under a dozen leaders, and not by regiments and brigades and divisions, all under one leader, assisted by co-operation of all his forces. Not only so, but some good people seem afraid lest old differences should not continue, and the old suicidal and wicked division of moral forces endure. They seem to think that to be faithful to truth they must keep knocking somebody down, or be continually knocked down themselves; and that if opposition to them should cease, and former opponents begin to coalesce with them, the truth for which they have so long struggled would in some way be endangered, and their relation to it changed.

Why, I am astonished at the way some men talk and act.

There is a certain class of orthodox Christians who seem to be afraid to have any one outside of their own sect agree with them. They have made orthodoxy consist so much in theological position, that they are frightened to see those who have held different views begin to harmonize with them. If a man preaches the Gospel with such demonstration of love and spiritual power that it reaches the heart, and a person supposed to be a Unitarian says, "That's good preaching enough for me," they are at once to be suspicious of the preaching and the preacher. As if bitterness and difference and wrangling were to continue for ever!—just as if God had nothing in store for us but perpetual alienation, division, and hostility! I do not give any such monstrous prediction as that. The world goes on, and it moves, as impelled by God's spirit, toward harmony and peace, and a union of moral forces, here and world over, under one banner, in order to accomplish certain desired and needed results. For one I hail, as an auspicious sign, these symptoms of returning good sense, and correct views, loving fellowship together under Christ. I would go farther and find one point of agreement with a good man than to discover one of difference. My brother, in love to man and faith toward God—brother still, although differing in views—tell me what we hold in common with me; tell me where and how we can join hands to teach the ignorant, and clothe the naked, and feed the starving, and reform the vicious; and leave whatever difference there may be between us for God to settle and explain when we have entered his presence. There is such a thing as a man standing so straight as to fall over backward, and it is possible for a Christian to make so much of his denomination or creed as to forget the Gospels. The Puritans were orthodox enough, but they were not precisely such models as we should follow in their treatment of dissentients. They drew their inspiration from the Jewish rather than the Christian dispensation. The Old Testament, and not the New, misapplied and perverted, was the baleful torch with which they lighted their path-fires.



Now, it seems to me perfectly natural that men who have opposed evangelical religion should gradually drop their opposition, and begin to harmonize with it. A vast deal of opposition to orthodox opinion in this city springs from a gross ignorance of what it teaches and its holders believe. Men have been educated to believe a slander and a lie. They have been educated to believe that we of evangelical views preach "that hell is paved with infants' skulls,"—that "men by nature are as bad as devils, as bad as they can be,"—and other enormous and outrageous propositions, which no orthodox preacher preaches or believes. And when, one by one, they are undeceived; when they hear us preach of the love and tenderness of God for human kind; when they hear us preach a Gospel of hope, of love for others, of cheerfulness and progression, they are surprised, and say, "Well, now, if that is orthodox preaching, then I am orthodox."

There is another thought in this connection, and I am glad to call your attention to it, for it requires frankness on my part to suggest, and candour on your part to consider it. The great joy of my public life is that I am in a city where free speech in America was born, where it has been nurtured, and where it still thrives. Your intelligence is such that you not only do not fear, but you desire, the freest utterance on the part of your speakers, the fullest discussion of passing events; your city has been the theatre of a great religious revolution; some of you can remember, perhaps, the earthquake which shook the doctrinal structure of many churches to the ground. You heard the crash and the shouting which followed. And now another great movement is beginning to make itself felt. Men who have been trying to build a house without mortar and without brick are beginning to search for the old foundations, if peradventure they may find, in modified form, some basis for their faith to stand on. I doubt whether men were ever more dissatisfied with the old faith than they are with the new, ever more adrift and uneasy within themselves as to what to believe. Seventy years of experiment have demonstrated that negation is not religion, that

scepticism is no adequate equivalent for faith, and that men who can do nothing but tear away and pull down and destroy are no fit guides to those who believe in right and wrong and the immortality of the soul. And we who attempt to discuss these matters, whom you have chosen as your watchmen, are bound to tell you how the heavens look, and which way the wind blows.

Well, the thought which I would suggest is this: It is the law that all revolts from established order of thought should go first to extremes, and then to gradually correct themselves. Men do not at once see the logical results of revolution. They do not see that anarchy is removed but a single step from independence. When this city broke away from the position of the fathers, many of the prime movers in that theological stampede never dreamed to what madness their followers would go. Channing never dreamed of a Frothingham. I speak from the evangelical stand-point, of course, and I say that there are thousands of Unitarians, so called, in this city to-day—men and women of holy lives, who love the Bible as much as we do—who are appalled at the radical wing of their denomination. They see as plainly as we—no one with eyes can help seeing it—that the drift and tendency of their teaching is toward infidelity and the baldest scepticism. They are alarmed, and, like merchantmen that have discovered a pirate in the fleet, begin to draw off. They are not prepared to throw overboard the Scriptures, to call Christ nothing more than John Jones, to dig a pit and cast their long-cherished hopes of heaven into it; and their natural inclination, the logical tendency of their position, is to get back to safer ground. I verily believe that a practical, if not a nominal, union will ere long be made between this class of Unitarians and the great body of evangelical believers. The date of that happy event may be retarded by unforeseen circumstances, by pride and perversity on either side; but it is bound to come. Over our graves our children will join their hands, and the Commonwealth, to found which the fathers laboured and died, will stand, the disastrous schism healed, clothed once more in the unity of her ancestral and triumphant faith.

Come, then, Peace, and breathe upon us ! Come, as the wind comes from the south, warm as the touch and fragrant as the breath of love ! Come, as the dove came to the ark, bearing with thee the symbol and evidence that the waters of death are ebbing, and a new world of promise is rising into sight ! Come, as the angels came at the birth of Christ, and tell us once more of peace and goodwill to men !

There are other reasons than those I have mentioned for this hope, among which is this,—that similarity of labours begets similarity of feeling, and results in a practical union. Men are looking and planning for the union of all denominations, on the ground of doctrinal unanimity. They think that this denomination will give up one point, and another some other ; that each in the interest of union will pare off some denominational corner, and shade down to a common hue some exceptional colour, until at last everybody will think alike. My friends, that day will never come ; at least, it is too remote for us of this generation to debate. It is a dream, to the fulfilment of which the structure of the human mind itself is opposed. Men will never think on any one topic precisely alike. They cannot look at truth from exactly the same point of view, any more than a hundred persons can look at an oil painting from precisely the same angle of vision. The light and shade will not appear the same to each. Education, temperament, predilections, amounting often almost to a prejudice—these will come in and cause divergence of opinion. So long as the Bible is a necessity, so long will different interpretations be patronized. While we see God through a glass darkly, our views of him will vary, because dimness and the moving of many shadows are between us and him. Not until we have risen above the heavy atmospheres of this mortal life—not until, through the crystalline medium of heaven, we behold him face to face, and from that altitude, with holy and instructed vision, see all the outgoings of his nature, all the sequence of his doings, from beginning to end, shall we see him as with one eye. In the light of that demonstration differences will fade away, and the multitude of the redeemed will stand,

hand clasped in hand, around a common throne. But until that day, my friends, I look for no intellectual unity. While theology is a science, and knowledge of God depends on human, and hence fallible and conflicting, interpretations, men will continue to differ in religious matters. Doctrinally they will stand apart from and opposed to each other. When we see God face to face, we shall all see him alike, and not until then.

No. The path of union and peace in the religious world lies not in that direction. Individual opinions will obtrude their obstructions in front of us in the future as in the past. They cannot be levelled and graded down. You cannot make a composite of men's conflicting views, and macadamize the future so that the world will roll onward and upward without a jolt or jar. The true and only practical ground of union is found in union of effort, and not union of views; in oneness of feeling, and not oneness of opinions; in similarity of conduct, and not similarity of belief. The Methodist, so far as his head goes, will be a Methodist still, the Baptist a Baptist, and the Unitarian a Unitarian; but in heart, in purpose, in hope of heaven, in labours for man, in the emotional and benevolent energies of our natures, we find our union. Recruited from many states—of complex opinions—differing in our views as to the causes of the rebellion, and how the campaign should be fought out—agreeing only in this, that we are willing to unite and act together as against a common enemy, we put ourselves under one Leader, blind to all else save this, that the banner over us is Love. This is a union to be desired; this is such a union as it is our duty to have; and this, thank God, is nearly ours.

Men say that I am hopeful, and so I am; but my hope is not a vain dream, a poetical aspiration. It is a hope born of knowledge; it is based upon the apprehension of a law—a law which I trace through all the pages of history as a man traces a golden thread through a piece of cloth which is being unrolled before his eyes. The law is this: that the world has moved onward and upward by an accelerated motion and ever-multiplying accumulation of forces. The driving power has increased as the

train has gone thundering on ; and never did good influence move so fast, never did they control and shape so many, as they do to-day. The progress made toward union and peace in religious matters, in the last two centuries, is a matter of astonishment. A few facts will illustrate this to your satisfaction, and show you with what long and rapid strides we have advanced.

Two hundred years ago tyranny ruled here, and the worst kind of tyranny at that ; for it was tyranny, not over men's bodies, but over their minds. About all the religious freedom the Puritans knew was, "Think as we do, or suffer the consequences."

Two hundred years ago two men were tied to the tail of a cart, and whipped through your streets with knotted lashes—"with all the power the hangman could put forth," as the record says—their mouths being stopped with wooden gags to prevent their cries of agony from being heard. And what, pray, was their offence? Simply and solely because they were Quakers! A woman—and a recent mother at that—with her babe in her arms, was tied to the whipping-post, and beaten nearly to death. And why? . Because she was a Quakeress. And when released from that brutal violence, she dropped upon her knees, poor woman, and prayed that God would forgive her persecutors, and bring, at last, a day of liberty and peace to this city.

That day has come. It is here, and we are living in it ; and the soul of that saintly Quakeress looks down from heaven, and sees the fulfilment of her prayers, and rejoices at the sight! Two hundred years ago a man was cruelly and publicly whipped for being a Baptist.

Why do I mention these things? Simply that you may realize the progress which the world has made in the last two centuries toward union and peace ; that you may see that, when one expresses the belief that not many years hence all who obey God and love their fellow-men shall stand together, he does not deal in extravagant speech, but makes a prediction which all

tory warrants and renders probable. I tell you, friends, the warfares, one by one, are dying out. The sounds of bitter contention are being hushed. Death is gradually bringing a delusion to past bitterness, and traces of conflict are being covered by the grass which grows on graves. We are all sailing, as a ship, after a period of storm, goes moving into the sun. The clouds are broken and rolled upward. The sea and sky are crimson, every sail is a sheet of orange, every rope a cord of gold. And so it moves along its path of emerald, crested with fire, gathering a deeper glory as it moves, until the winds cease, the waters sleep, and night, brilliant with stars, settles over the tranquil sea.

It not only does the course of history corroborate this view, but the very nature of the case makes it probable. Why, what is the great aim of the Gospel? What is its drift and tendency? To separate and antagonize the good? To divorce and divide the good and set one in array against another? No; the tendency of Christianity is to bring the good together. Christ is as a great magnet, and those who feel the attraction of his name and spirit converge and are drawn nearer together themselves, being drawn nearer to him. When we sing, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," we mean not only nearness to him, but also nearness to all his creatures. The good of all ages and climes belong, in a peculiar manner, to each other. Not one of all that vast multitude who have perished at the stake; not one of the thousands who laid down their lives for liberty; not one of that long list who died before the dawn of the day in which we now rejoice, sighing for light; not a man or woman is striving or dying for man's good to-day, but all are knit and united to me. I appropriate the spirit as truly the results of their lives. For what is history—for what is civilization—for what the arts and appliances of letters—for what the element of sympathy in man—if not to unite us to the good and the good of all time? I anticipate the fellowship of heaven that shall be mine in heaven, as the gardener anticipates the rich perfume of the blossom by the first suggestion of fragrance in the bud. We enrol ourselves in the great fraternity

of God's children on earth before we enter the fellowship of his children in heaven.

My friends, as the power of the Spirit is more and more felt in our hearts, so will this divine unity of love between all the good be more realized in our souls. It is not for me to say who will feel it, it is not for me to say who is worthy; but all who are worthy will feel it. Names will continue to exist, nominal distinctions will survive; but, deeper than all, dearer than all, the unity of the spirit will be felt. We shall still abide each in his own house, but the intercourse of love and community of feeling will exist untrammelled and unchecked. From the ashes of former difference peace shall spring, more perfect in plumage, sweeter in song, than the Phoenix of the classics, and man shall be to his fellow-man a brother.

Now, having spoken of the union and peace which are to be experienced among masses of men—of that “bond of perfectness” which is to unite and adorn the pure and good, supplanting present alienation and difference, I would allude to the second point, and direct the application of my theme and text to individuals.

I remark, then, that Christianity produces a union of the powers and energies of the individual soul.

The soul—by which I mean all the operant faculties of man's nature—is now divided, and half is hostile to half.

Take the case of any man or woman; let any one of you analyze your emotions, recall your past; and you will find that, since the birth of conscience in you, you have been at war with yourself—your soul has been the arena of conflict. Duty and inclination have been at war. Your very emotions have joined in the unnatural contest, and often risen in rebellion against what you knew was right. The good in you has held its own, as a man holds his own in battle, fighting against odds, at the point of the bayonet. My friends, I do not say that there are none who float through life—men and women who do not struggle, have few temptations, make few falls: some may be protected by circumstance; some, by their very weakness and

lack of fibre, may have stood unhurt, as grasses stand, when the gale overhead is wringing and wrenching the branches from the oaks, and riving them to the very heart. But natures that have any girth to them, any upward reach, any latitude of emotion, any tree-like formation, are exposed to pressure—are often made the sport of converging currents and riotous forces. Such natures are constantly agitated and blown about, and full of writhing and groaning. In this category most of the race, and I presume most of those to whom I am speaking, belong. You have not floated through life as a feather floats upon the evening air; nor will you sink, as that feather falls, unknown and unnoted, into forgetfulness. In different spheres of labour and life you have toiled and suffered; you have made your wealth or daily support not by luck, but by years of application; you have done some good, and wrought some evil, and the war between the higher and lower parts of your nature still wages. Even the blessed Sabbath is not so much a day of rest as a breathing-spell; for the morrow, and all the days ahead, will be full of panting and struggle, until breath fails and the conflict is over for ever.

Now, I want to speak to you who have been tossed and buffeted amid the conflicting experiences of life; and I want you to feel that every word comes directly from my heart to your hearts, that my soul speaks to your souls; and I say to you, my brother and sister, that all you have felt and suffered, and borne up against, and been prostrated by, was a part of God's merciful dealings with you. He has blown and buffeted you, he has wrung and wrenched you, that he might teach you the lesson of your weakness and dependence. You have been honoured by chastisement, you have been strengthened by opposition, you have been glorified through suffering. When you draw nigh to heaven, you will draw nigh to it, it is true, as ships creep into harbour after a night of storm—their masts broken, their sails in tatters, and their decks all littered with wreck; but you will enter it with hymns of praise and thanksgiving for your deliverance. Nor will you lack welcome. Heaven is full



of sympathy for such as barely escape wreck ; and the shining shore will shine all the brighter because of the glorified faces that shall throng it as your souls are floated up toward the golden marge.

And you must also feel that, even in this life, victory, in part, will be yours. As the days pass, you will find that, as a reward for virtuous effort, self-mastery is slowly but surely coming to you. Every tempest will cause you to root yourself deeper in, and twine yourself more closely around, Christ as the great, immovable Rock of your salvation. And when that last and strongest gale—which blows for all, and overturns many—shall bear down upon you, the unification of all your powers having been completed, and with every thought and purpose and hope of your heart purged and perfected, you will stand triumphant, exclaiming, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?”

But, my friend, where will you be in that hour—you who have no Saviour to whom to cling—where? No, I will not tell you. What does your heart say? What does your conscience say? What does the Bible say?

You see, my friends, what gateway leads to peace. The hope, the only hope of it, is Christ, the author of all peace, in you, working out the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Through faith in him, and in the direction of God's providential dealings, the good in your nature gains the ascendant, and the evil gradually retires. Stone by stone, and block by block, the temple of your hope is rising. Every stone represents a struggle, every block a mighty effort. Without God you would never have started to build, and without him you can never even now finish. If any soul here is looking for peace in any other direction, if he thinks it will come to him in any other way, that soul will surely be mistaken. You must fight and pray if you would win. The cross, by the law of God's appointment, precedes the crown. These are trite sayings; but they express a truth which underlies all Christian hope, and inspires all Christian effort.

But, friends, do all you may, fight bravely as you may, still victory will come only at the setting of the sun. The land of peace lies on the other side of the grave. That is the outer door of sombre surface, behind which the gates of solid pearl emit their splendour. Never let your minds dwell on the grave—that gateway to a happier world—as over something dark and repellant. In ignorance the world draped it in sable, and made their funeral gatherings around it with lamentations. Nothing short of the resurrection of Christ could have dispelled this fear, and stemmed the tide of human superstition. In his death he made a greater revelation than in his life.

The tomb had been from the beginning the terror of the world—a deep, dark, impenetrable mystery. But Christ did not shrink. He went down into the shadow of its silence, explored its unknown recesses, felt his way along the crumbling edge of his mortality, threaded the labyrinth to its farthest extremity, and, reascending to the light, the world beheld him again. But how did they behold him? They beheld him leading captivity captive!

He was sown in weakness, but he was raised in power: he was sown in dishonour, but he was raised in glory.

In the light of that investigation, and that result, we know what the grave is, and its relation to the good.

The world is full of failures which this life can never retrieve. Many of you have lost what you will never find on the earth, for the waves of death have cast it high up on the farther shore. Some of you have missed what you most purely longed for; the songs you might have sung fail in your throat, and laughter serves to prevent a groan. Your early hopes have not been realized, and you are now too old to hope. The strings of the harp are broken, and it is now too late in the night to retune the tangled chords.

But, friends, let no one of you, in such straits, be overmuch discouraged or cast down. Peace will yet come to you. Death will bring to you the opportunity of a new start. The conditions of this mortal life will not pursue you beyond the grave.

All that hindered, all that burdened, all that vexed you here, will be no longer felt. In the quiet of its shadow, in the fulness of life beyond, the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.

Thus, by the gradual rectification of our natures, and the unification of all our powers in holiness, and then—as the finishing and perfecting providence—the change which death shall work in our condition, mankind at last will find their peace. Thus God's great plan in Christ, of which the angels sang, shall be consummated, and peace shall be on earth, and good-will to man.

But what is the cause of this peace, and through what medium does it primarily come to us? I answer, that the love of God is the cause, and belief in Christ is the medium through which it comes to every heart that opens to receive it.

There is not a man, there is not a woman, there is not a youth, I care not how widely you have wandered, nor how deeply you have sinned, nor how great has been your rebellion, to whom God in his love does not come and offer this peace, as secured to you in the death of your Saviour. Only drop your hostility, only forego your rebellion, only throw down your arms, only utter a cry, only make a sign, he says, and I will pardon you here and now. This is the love of God to you, as held by the Evangelical churches. Was there ever a love like unto it? Think of your life, now far spent, perhaps—your life of neglect, of indifference, of ingratitude, of opposition, and then tell me if you have ever known, in father or mother, in husband or wife, in any friend, living or dead, a love to be compared to this divine love for you? There are faces back of me over which as they sleep the evergreens wave to-day. There are faces which nightly, by the side of couches, and in the flush of morning, are lifted to heaven for me in prayer. They express all that the human heart may feel of love and solicitude for man. Yet, in the face of him who lifteth the light of his countenance upon me as I speak, *I behold the expression of a love deeper, a tenderness more*

a longing more intense, than ever heart of flesh might human features express.

If these voices should be hushed, all these faces averted, these eyes turned away, the love of God for me would still be unchanged and unchangeable. By the ministrations of life I live shall I find all needed support, and, at death, be in its embrace for ever.

centuries seem rolled together as I speak, the past meets the present, and out of the distance, like notes of music from afar, swelling into the distinctness of utterance as a roll, culminating over your heads in benediction, I catch more the song that never dies, "On earth, peace, good-will to all men."

## THE SAMARITAN LEPER.

BY REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*“And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?”—LUKE xvii. 17.*

OUR Lord was, in all probability, on his last journey toward Jerusalem. Somewhere along the road, he encounters ten men that were lepers—ten human beings in the last degree unfortunate and miserable. It would appear that they had heard of Christ. The reputation of the Great Healer had gone before him. These men, standing afar off, as the law required, cried out to him to have mercy on them. He bid them go show themselves to the priests, and it came to pass as they went they were healed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at the feet of Christ, giving him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. “And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.”

Each particular feature of this record is peculiarly suggestive and instructive; yet, before we enter upon the particulars, there are some thoughts which are suggested by it as a whole. *The healing power of Jesus was not only wonderful in itself, but he was wonderful in the exercise of it. There was about him a*

strange ease, an instant readiness, a natural unconsciousness of anything extraordinary, even in his most wonderful works. There is no sameness in his method, no formal preliminaries, no set routine. The time, the individual, the circumstances, find their exact counterpart in the action he spontaneously adopts. We feel that no action to him would have been impossible. He cures ten as easily as one, but whether one or ten there is the same unconsciousness about him. He makes no addition to his claims. He is as accessible after three years of this work as when he first began. He is still poor, and still humble, and the poorest and humblest have in him still a brother. They feel it.

This is very natural. If we admit Jesus to be the Son of God, we expect all this. There can be no discord in that which is divine. If the divine power were there to work the miracles, then that power could not be officiously obtrusive. All that is divine is simple, all that is true is unpretending; but this power being there, the question might arise, Why did not Christ adopt some other plan of exercising that power? He unquestionably came to convince us of his Messiahship. His line of conviction involved all merciful works. "Go and tell John what things ye have seen and heard." That was needful for John, but nothing short of it could have convinced this world. It was worthy of God to lift us up out of our distresses, to heal all our woes. Why, then, did he not make his healing instantly universal? Why did he not stand at the Temple in Jerusalem, and heal at once, by a word, all that were afflicted in Israel? Would it not have been more august? Would it not more effectually have staggered high priests and scribes? Would it not have sent a thrill of life throughout the land, which would have told every heart the long-expected Christ had come? One would imagine so. That would have been our way of doing it—our way of failing to do it. But there, again, God was true to himself; even the miracles cannot be without law. Even if a great pronouncement had been made at Jerusalem, and every leper in Israel had been instantly released, the effect would have

been but temporary. What we have in common we cease to be thankful for. Every day of health is a great gift from God as rich and blessed as that first day to the grateful leper when he found himself cured. But we are not thankful. That which costs us nothing is worth little to us; that which costs us much we value in proportion. God might heal all the sickness in this whole world to-day, but then there would be more sickness to-morrow. If God healed all every day, he would have more and more every day to heal, for we should, instead of being thankful, only every day be more reckless, till God's apparent goodness would ruin us. We should never learn, and never be wise. We trifle with God now; we should insult him then. The race can be gathered to God, not by any coercion, but one by one, by voluntary attraction. God's good gifts are for those who seek them; none can know God's goodness but those who come directly to God for it, and God gives to those who come in precisely the way that best suits them—the way that makes itself most impressive to them. Hence Christ's unsameness in his ministrations. He meets each heart. He responds to that according to the degree of its yearning, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Ten are cleansed—nine want nothing more than bodily comfort; one wants a Saviour. What we ask for we have; what we seek we find; when we knock it is opened to us. Under a grand pronouncement from Jerusalem, we should have had what we thought was a God—what we worship now too often, distantly, fearfully—but we should have had no brother, no being literally to bear our sorrows, and carry our burdens; we should have had no Father; we should have been criminals, not prodigals. God so came to us as really to come to us, the lowliest, most wretched. That was like God. That is the wonderfulness of the wonderful works of Jesus. You can come to him, any of you that will come. Christ is a brother; God is a father; we are his children.

There were ten of these lepers. Ten was a sort of perfect number among the Jews; ten men might constitute a synagogue—an assembly. It was the unit of church organization. *How these ten assume at once a representative character!*

How like this human race! Every day we cry to God for blessing; every day God looks down and blesses. Having what we want, every day we forget to be grateful. That same Saviour gave himself a ransom for many—died to release us from the fearful leprosy of sin. How few there are who turn back to find him—to fall at his feet in thankfulness—to devote life to him in a true acknowledgment of him before men—a benefactor and Saviour. Still God blesses us; his mercies are new to us every morning, and fresh every evening. Be our hearts what they may, he is true to himself. Be we Jew or Gentile, his all-yearning love and benevolence are the same. Jesus does not pledge these lepers to come back to him. His mercy is unconditional. If a sense of love do not touch the heart, then no pledges can reach it. He yearned as much to bless their souls as their bodies—even more. He blessed their bodies, if possible, to reach their souls. He does not refuse to do the less, because they will not accept the greater. They do not confess him at all, except in that selfishness which to him must have been painful; but he said nothing about it. How natural their desire to be healed—and how much better, too, it would be for them to be relieved of their woe. Jesus felt it. Possibly, to lift them out of bodily degradation would be to elevate them in their moral being. Christ deemed the experiment worth the trial. Did he give us no great lesson in that? We have not always acted, and do not always act, with the wisdom of Christ. We make distinctions between men. We refuse sometimes to do men good in a lower degree, because we cannot do them good in the highest degree. It is a comparatively recent thing that we have been trying to save men's bodies, in the hope at last of saving their souls. Men have organized temperance societies and houses of reform, and orphan homes and public schools. Some good men pretend to think they cannot help such agencies—there is no religion in them—men should go to church and be Christians; that will do for all men all they want. We will not lift them at all, because we cannot lift *them as high as we would, as high as they ought to be. Their*



very need of help is a reason why they should not have it. Our argument virtually says, If they were Christians, then we would like to do something for them; but because these means are outside the church, and have no religion in them, we cannot touch them. As if it were more religious to stand still and do nothing, than it would be to go to work hand and heart to do all the good that can be done. Is a man nearer to God in soberness than in drunkenness?—then it is our duty by any means to lift him into soberness. Is a man better off with a secular education than in ignorance, with all the ills attendant, in the shape of vice and crime?—then it is our duty, by the most efficient means, to give him the highest practicable education. If we are in the church, and are religious, then religion and the church make it our bounden duty. Suppose the Saviour could have done nothing for us till we came up to his standard, then we could not have known he was a Saviour. In giving man the less, we prepare him to receive the greater. Christ's merciful action, out of ten, saved one. That one was worth the saving.

Besides, what is the meaning of that command, "Go, show yourselves unto the priests?" On another occasion, when Christ had cured a man, he bid him go show himself to the priests, and offer the money for his cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. It was their office to declare a man cured, and by outward ablutions and ceremonies to restore him to the privilege of church communion. Over and above that, it was their business, or ought to have been, to find out who or what had effected the cure, to make known that agency, and bring other men under its power. The appearance of a healed man before the priests was a testimony unto them that a great healer was among them. They ought to have been foremost of all men in inquiring who he was, what he was. They ought to have been foremost of all men in bringing Christ before the people, as a healer. That might have led to their acceptance of him as a Messiah. It was unworthy their office, their *very manhood*, to stand—as we read in the Gospel they did *and—and watch him*, and that only to find fault with him. *the less, they also lost the greater.* Duty demanded of them

that they should lead. The people had a right to expect them to lead. The Saviour virtually said that to them in sending those men there; and I think, when any agency clearly accomplishes good, and the testimony comes up to us, we are in duty bound to inquire into it, and make it do all the good we can. The world has the same claim upon us Christians that the Jewish people had upon the priests. We are all kings and priests unto God. Not an agency should appeal to us in vain. No society which is in its nature benevolent can, in the nature of things, be irreligious. If it have not all the religion in it that it ought to have, we, of all men, should try to put as much in it as we can. If we were more diligent in lifting men's bodies, we should be more successful in lifting their souls. Solemn considerations are every day multiplying to tell us we must be more diligent in such work than we have been, or by-and-bye it will hardly be worth while to work even in the church. If we let souls drift further and further from us, what hope can we have of at last embracing them? The Saviour's love and wisdom saved one. That one was worth saving, though he was a Samaritan.

I confess, it makes me feel very uncomfortable to read so often in the Gospel that these exceptions in goodness were Samaritans. It not only occurs in actual fact, but the Saviour himself, when he would relate an act of goodness, makes the exception. Did he mean "to have a fling" at the church? What absurd notions take possession of people sometimes! When shall we be wiser than the Jews, and be able and willing to face the truth? Can it be that our outward connection with the church can have a tendency to make us mistake the internal verities? Is there any danger of our being educated out of sincerity and truth into shadow and deception? The Jews were so educated. Their religion, if I may so speak, made them irreligious. They put prejudice for reason, and their notions for truth. May we not be like them? There must be danger somewhere, or else the Saviour would not have put so much emphasis upon that thought. The question arises

whether those nine who did not return were all Jews? Many of them must have been, or it would not have been remarkable that he who returned was a Samaritan. It is a wonder they would have had a Samaritan with them at all. It has been observed that when a low country is overflowed, animals of varied dispositions, between which sometimes exist great antipathies, will collect upon a friendly island, and in the common misfortune forget all animosities and dwell together in peace. A common woe made these Jews and the Samaritan friends. How strange it is that all we—clustered upon this little globe—brethren in a common sin, in a universal misfortune—have not yet learned to love one another. But to go back to those nine. If they were Jews, as they probably were, it would be interesting to know why they did not return. Where were the nine? Was it all ingratitude? Did the priests have anything to do with it? Did they say, “Look out for that man! he is a heretic; he pronounces woes against us”? How often do our prejudices make us mistake our best friends! Oh! how often do we receive blessings from those we are ashamed of afterwards! How often does mere prejudice keep us back from the expression of a noble sentiment—cheat us out of nobility! Alas! what an influence for evil we can have over each other sometimes! How strange that such power should be given to man! But since we have such a power, how true and noble we ought to be, that we might exercise it for one another's good! Christ was not popular, and these men had not the courage to be noble. It often happens so. But then it might not have been so with them. Possibly they did not go to the priests at all. Perhaps it was joy carried them off somewhere else. A leper was as one dead. Being healed, they thought of home, of wife and child, of father and mother. Oh, yes! there are deep-rooted and God-implemented natures within us. Men are not always as bad as they seem to be. The one longing for the old familiar faces eclipsed the emotions of gratefulness to him who had set them free. It ought not so to have been. In going home they ought not to have been able

simply to tell they were healed of their leprosy, but that their souls had, in the presence of Jesus, drunk in the joys of a new and a higher life, so that they might bring their families and friends and say, "Behold the Lamb of God," &c. And why did the Samaritan come back? There is ever a something to explain our actions. We are not naturally one very much better than another. Perhaps he had no home. He was restored to the world, and the world to him was desolate. He could think of nobody but Jesus. He came back to him, and found relief in loving him. In that love he found a new blessing. He felt not only his body healed, but his soul saved. If it were that he was in want of a home, we should say he was unfortunate. But how often do our misfortunes bring us to God! How very often does the removal of earthly joys cause us to find the heavenly! God is good in what he gives, and good in what he withholds. Would we only love him, all things would work together for our good. There were ten cleansed; we cannot tell what became of the nine; the one came to Jesus: that one was saved.

But the one thought we ought to draw from this record is, there are richer blessings with Jesus than those we seek anywhere else, or those we first seek even from him. Our necessities, our misfortunes, our carnal cravings, do not bring us to him. They only cause us to cry out to him from afar. It is true, he is a ready help in all time of need to all that call upon him. He hears and answers the call. We would be wise to do what he bids, even though to all appearance the doing can be of little good. If by his word he bids us submit, then there is blessing in submission. If by his providence he bids us go down to even deeper degrees of misfortune, then in every degree there is blessing. But we must get beyond this kind of coming. Such a coming is selfish. It is rooted in a desire to get rid of what we are, not to become what he is. What he is is the real blessing. Grace and truth are with him; love and peace and safety are with him; wisdom and knowledge and all virtue are with him; rich and sweet revealings for our spirits are with him.

For all this we must seek immediate access to him, companionship with him. You see, this is the point: if we obey him, it will come to pass that as we go we shall be cleansed—we shall get rid of the old leprosy, old bad habits, old vices. But all that is merely negative. If religion do no more for us than that, it brings us up only to where we are nothing. It is not bare morality we want, but religion. Morality is neither virtue nor vice, but the half-way house between. Morality is negative, religion is positive. It is not the absence of vice that God loves, it is the presence of grace. It is not the absence of vice that makes heaven; it is not the absence of vice that can make us meet for the enjoyment of the saints in light; it is the presence of the spirit that was in Jesus—it is likeness to him. It is not that we would be unclothed, but “clothed upon,” as Paul says, “that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” We must take heed, therefore, that as we go we be cleansed. Not only so, but that we come back to Jesus to receive of his fulness—take heed that we come back, not in mere lip-service, but in active ministry. Holy action is the language that God loves. He serves God who serves any good. Let us be sure we are doing that; not like the crowd which is thoughtless and pre-occupied, but like the one grateful Samaritan. The way of service is the way of faith. By faith we shall be made whole.

## THE RELATIONS OF BELIEF TO PRACTICE.

BY REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

*"Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?"—JAMES ii. 22.*

THE Apostle is here insisting on the value of works, and their relation to faith. There is a certain earnestness and urgency in every line of this chapter which show that James was greatly wrought upon by his subject. He was evidently a very zealous worker himself, and thoroughly awake to the importance of Christian activity. What a rubbing of eyes and pricking up of ears there would be on the part of our drowsy church-members if the apostle could visit Boston in the flesh, go down to North Street, and then stand in our pulpits and tell the churches what he had seen and heard, and what needed to be done in this Christian city! Of all the apostles I do not think that I would prefer my pulpit to any of them so willingly as to James. No one can read this chapter, and not feel that the writer was all in earnest with the conviction that the churches were in imminent danger. There is a certain tinge of impatience, of moral indignation, running through these passages, as if they were in peril of falling into a fatal error as to what constituted Christianity, and he could not refrain from telling them of it. They were in danger, and the danger was this—they were exaggerating the value of an intellectual belief. They were making

religion to consist overmuch in mental conception, and too little in practice. Christianity was becoming a matter of the head, and was being divorced from the hand and heart. James saw the danger, and threw himself across the path of declension, and said to the churches, "You cannot go a rod farther in this direction unless you walk over my warning and my authority." Now, I ask thoughtful men and women if this is not precisely the peril to which the church is exposed to-day. The faith of the Evangelical churches is sound enough, the forms of belief are correct enough, but the actual working power of the churches is dangerously weak. Take a dozen or twenty persons out of every hundred of their membership, and what would become of the churches? The fact is—and the sooner we look the fact squarely in the face the better it will be for Christ and us all—the fact is, a small minority of the church do all the work that is being done in the church. Many of our religious organizations are like unused reservoirs, into which the living water runs, and then stagnates. The church in its internal structure is essentially the same that it was a hundred years ago. It ignores the difference between city and country life, between agricultural sections and great commercial centres, between the wants and opportunities of a small, thinly-populated parish, and the wants and necessities of a densely crowded metropolis. In its internal organization, in its powers to give the public what it wants, the church is an anachronism. You might as well think that a hundred wells with the old-fashioned bucket and sweep could supply this city with water, as that you can convert this city while your churches use only the same means of instruction and reform as were employed fifty years ago. The Young Men's Christian Associations are a standing protest against the blindness and slowness of the churches. They were formed by active Christian men, and are working outside the church, because the church did not attempt the work inside itself. These bodies of young men are doing what the churches should have done. Twenty years ago every Evangelical church in Boston should have had a young men's Christian association in it. What a harvest

might have been reaped for God, and where might correct doctrine have stood to-day, if the orthodox churches had earned the gratitude of those young men who have flocked into this city for the last twenty years! Those young men, now middle-aged, own and control one half of Boston to-day. Error will never be headed off here by preaching and praying alone. When error represents intellect, when it represents philanthropy, when it represents art and culture and music, you must fight it with its own weapons. Match eloquence with eloquence, match culture with a higher finish, match its philanthropy with wider plans and a more generous outlay for human weal. Indolence can never overcome activity. Lethargy can never conquer wakefulness. Faith can never hold its own against works. No creed can be as beautiful as good deeds. The teaching and the feeding of the multitude must go together. A belief without any adequate expression in acts is like an organ when all its pipes are silent and its keys untouched. It is dumb. It charms no one. It attracts no one. But bring forth the player; let him press the keys, let the dead air in all the choral columns be started into vibrations, and how the anthem swells, and how hearts are lifted on the waves of sound, and all the thousands applaud, some with their hands, others with eyes filled with happy tears. That which was dumb has spoken, and the multitude hasten to give it praise.

So it is with a creed. Write it out with whatever care you can; let it be perfect in its phraseology, skilful in its definitions, indisputable in its authority—this and nothing more—and who cares for it? Does it touch any one's heart? Does it gain adherents? No. The world will never again fight over words as it once did. There will be no more church councils, like the Council of Trent, to last twenty years. Men are too busy now-a-days to spend half a lifetime in debating theological dogmas. But bring forth a man who has a good creed which he expresses in acts—let him say, "I love God with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself," and let him show it—and men will point to him and say, "A religion which will make a man act as Mr. A. does is the



religion for me." And so religion is honoured by his conduct, and his creed gains adherents.

This, then, is what I wish to speak of to you—the relation of a creed, or a set form of belief, to practice; and I hope to show that a creed is influential, and influential for good upon the practice.

It is fashionable nowadays to say, "I don't care what a man thinks, if he only acts rightly." The better way to put it would be, "I don't care what a man thinks if he don't act rightly." For a notoriously bad man has little influence in shaping public opinion, and hence he can do comparatively little mischief. But a good man has influence, and hence his every word becomes potential. There are two classes here in the community at the present time, both of which are in the wrong. The one class is composed of those who exalt the form of belief; loving and valuing creeds in themselves considered, disconnected from practice. They prize the church for the truths it holds, and not for the work it performs. Or, rather, they think that if the church is sound in the faith, if its doctrinal position is correct, if it holds to the form of sound words—it is doing a great work, it is meeting the demands of the age; and they listen with impatience to any criticism which may be made of it. They are apt to resent any strictures upon their conduct as an impertinent, injudicious, and unwarrantable interference with what in their eyes is well enough as it is. Now, my friends, this position is all wrong. It is essentially the same position that James in his epistle to the churches so vigorously inveighed against. It is elevating faith above works. It is putting too much stress upon the form of belief, and too little upon its practical expressions. It not only divorces faith from works, but it arrays the two—which by nature are as closely allied as the spring and stream—against each other, thereby creating an antagonism which does not naturally exist. The value of a belief is measured by the same law as the value of a well. The question is, not how much it will hold, but how much it will yield; not *solely as to the purity of the water or the amount of it, but the*

Great point is, how much thirst can it quench? how many dying ones can it revive and save? This is what gives value to a belief; this is what makes Christianity so precious to man.

The second class who are in error is made up of those who say, "The belief is of no importance anyway. I do not care what a man thinks, if he only acts rightly." Well, friends, there is truth in that, and it is because there are some grains of truth in it that it is dangerous. The devil never sends his sowers out with bags of pure tare seeds. He mingles a few dozen tare-seeds in a bushel of wheat, and so he gets his evil doctrines scattered and sown broadcast in the public mind—scattered, too, by good men who suppose that they are sowing nothing but God's own truth all the while.

Now this is the portion of truth in the saying, "I don't care what a man thinks, if he only acts rightly"—namely, a mere sentiment over against an act weighs little. A man's opinion may affect only himself, but his acts affect society at large. A man may think it right to steal; but so long as he refrains from stealing, no one suffers but himself because of his opinion. A person may think it right to throw a railroad train off the track; but so long as he does not do it, the travelling public is not injured. On the other hand, a man may be kindly disposed and sympathetic in words and thoughts; but if he gives no material expression to his charity, who is the better for it? The apostle puts this idea excellently in this illustration. It comes down nearer to the nineteenth-century style of speaking than almost any passage of Scripture. "If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

So you see, if James was in the right of it, it is what a man actually does that meets the demands of duty, and benefits society. And so far they speak truth who say, "It is what a man does, and not what he believes, that we care for." But *the error lies in this, that this form of expression overlooks one*

great point, namely, the close connection which exists between believing and doing. It ignores the fact that back of every act, and as its parent, is a thought, and that the child is apt to be of the same character as the father. Man is a thinking and reasoning being. He acts from convictions, or from impulses which are the result of previous conviction; and hence it is that his conduct and his views have a very intimate relation to each other. It will not do to say, "I do not care what a man thinks," when, in fact, it is what a man thinks that decides how he will act. Going before, and as the cause of every act, is a positive mental decision, and every decision is the result of previous education and reflection. To say otherwise is to dethrone man, and take the sceptre of self-sovereignty out of his hand. I want to make every young man feel that it makes a vast difference with his life and prospects what opinions he forms and what views he adopts; and hence it makes a vast difference what instructions and what instructors he has. I want to illustrate, on the level of every one's comprehension, that it makes a great difference what a man thinks, because of the influence which opinion has upon practice.

Take, for instance, one of your city police, to test the influence of one's views on his conduct, and the relation of the two. Suppose that a policeman should get it into his head that he is the best and most proper judge of guilt before the law. Suppose that he has a very poor opinion of courts and judges as agencies to administer law (and I am not so sure that he would differ from many of us if he should). Suppose he should say to himself, "I know what the law is—where it is right and where it is wrong, where it oppresses, and where it protects with a wise and needed protection—and I will administer it myself." He is conscientious in this, as I can conceive a police-officer might often be, and resolves himself into a judge, and the station-house into a supreme court, and proceeds to adjudicate on every case that comes within his cognizance—tries one, exonerates another, sends the third to prison, and hangs the *fourth*—takes the entire administration of law into his own

hands; does it honestly, does it because he feels it to be the best thing for the city. What would you men say to it? What would the law-making and law-interpreting power say to such conduct? Say! They would say that such usurpation of undelegated authority strikes at the very root of all government. Nor would the justice of the officer's decision affect the matter at all. Crime might be the more swiftly and surely punished, but the evil of his conduct would remain the same. The virtue and efficiency of the man would tell all the deadlier against free institutions. A just tyrant is the worst of tyrants. So you see that it does make a difference what a man thinks, if he happens to be on the police force.

Or, again, take a merchant as an illustration. Let him be a man whose sole ambition is to amass wealth, who halts at nothing, provided it will bring him money, and not subject him to imprisonment. He laughs at honesty, ridicules integrity as an old-fashioned and obsolete idea, cheats and swindles and steals, only in such a way that the law cannot get its grip on him. Take such a man—one of your prosperous villains—and what is the effect of his life and practice? In the first place, I answer, such a man degrades business, and brings a stigma upon an otherwise honourable pursuit. He assists also to debauch public sentiment, and lower the tone of public morals. He gives to commercial life an ignoble object, and inspires young men, dazzled with his successful trickery, with a base ambition. He sets a bad example to every one of his clerks, to every young business man in the city; and thereby does much to make its business character bad, not merely for the present, but for the future. A man whose virtue is supported on one side by the fear of public opinion, and by the terror of the jail on the other, who swindles honest men by "cornering" some railroad stock, and withholds from the government a portion of his taxable income, is a cheat, and a public peril. Such a man, like any other nuisance, ought to be abolished. So you see that it makes a difference what a man believes if he happens to be a merchant.

Or, again, take a judge. Let him be a man indifferent as to

justice, caring only for the salary and emolument of his office, unbraced by any nice sense of official obligation—such a judge as some of our cities are cursed with, who sit like an incubus on the neck of our jurisprudence, strangling and loading it down with the weight of their iniquitous decisions so heavily that it can barely keep its feet and stagger along—a judge who holds the balance in one hand, while the other is busy in taking bribes. Take such a judge, I say, and tell me if it does not make a difference what a man's views are; if it is so small a matter, after all, what opinion a man holds, and what theory of legal administration he believes in.

Well, society is not composed solely of policemen and merchants and judges, but nearly every person exerts more or less influence upon it; and what is true of one is true of all, that what a man thinks decides in a great measure what a man does, and so it is of vast importance to the community that every member of it should have proper views and hold to proper opinions. By as much as men are ignorant and prejudiced, by as much as they have wrong views of government, by so much will their actions be wrong and their influence hurtful. And in nothing else is this so evident as in matters of religion; and upon no other thing is it so essential that the public should be rightly informed as concerning its views of God, and those relations which spring from his control over us.

Now, in this city, unfortunately, there exists a difference of opinion concerning some of the principal truths of revelation. I say that this is unfortunate; for both parties cannot be in the right, and therefore the influence of the one or the other class must be hurtful.

You may take the matter of the divinity of Christ. A majority of the city hold that Christ is divine—that is, truly God. A minority, on the other hand, respectable in point of numbers, and of considerable influence, hold that Christ was simply a human being; or rather (for there is great latitude of opinion among their own members), that he was a created being, and, being a creature, less than God. Some hold that he was

purely and simply a man like Socrates, or Plato, or John Brown ; while others maintain that he was a superior being, an angel, a prince among angels, perhaps, but in no sense divine.

I am not to repeat before you the evidences of Christ's divinity. I have not the time, nor does the object I have in view in this discourse require me to do it. I simply wish to make the statement, to show the difference of opinion between these two classes, and the difference that it must make in one's conduct whether a person thinks that Christ was God in the flesh, or simply a man.

On the one hand, if he was simply a man, then the entire significance of the New Testament is changed from what it is if Christ is God ; for it makes a great difference in my mind and yours, in my life and yours, whether the central figure which moves through all its history and gives its dignity to it, is God in human form, or a mere man,—simply one of the millions of the human race. When Christ speaks, it makes—and I cannot prevent it—a great difference, in my views of him, whether I regard his words as the utterance of the Deity himself, or the expression of an individual opinion ; when he says, alluding to God, “ I and my Father are one,” I must decide, in order to know what to think and do, whether it is the calm statement of conscious divinity, or nothing but the extravagant and blasphemous assertion of a Galilean peasant ; and the influence of the New Testament on my life, in shaping my daily conduct, is largely decided by what I think of Christ. For, as all of you will admit, Christ is so intimately connected with it, he is so much the light and life of it, that my regard and reverence for it rises or sinks with my opinion of him. He is the column around which all its history, its precepts, its doctrines, are twined ; and with the fall of the central shaft all the pendent surroundings are cast in one tangled and disordered mass to the ground. If a man, then is the Sermon on the Mount no more to me than the dialogue of Socrates with his friends in the prison before he drank the fatal cup, or the speculations of Plato. If God, then is it the utterance of Heaven itself, and I regard

it as the supreme expression vouchsafed to man for the government of his disposition and the salvation of his soul.

Or, again, if Christ is God, then is he the fit object of prayer and worship, and my soul can go to him as unto the ultimate object of its desires and adoration. If only a created being, then is it sin for me to address him in prayer and praise; for we are solemnly forbidden to worship any but God alone.

My friends, be pleased to observe I am not arguing the matter. I am simply stating to you, impartially, certain facts, and deducing from them certain conclusions, to which I think all of you who are intelligent and candid must assent. And my point is to show, not what we should believe of Christ, but that it makes a great difference with ourselves and others what we do think. It is not a matter of little importance, but of the most solemn interest to every one of you, and not alone to you, but to all those, your children and friends, upon whom, by example and instruction, you have influence. And I hope none of you will ever say, "Oh! it don't make much difference what you think about Christ, if you only act rightly." For it does make a vast difference. First, because we should think of him nothing but what is truth, neither adding to nor detracting from his dignity. And, secondly, because our action toward him depends very much on what we think of him.

Now, I wish to mention one other point of disagreement in public opinion here, concerning religious matters, in further illustration of my theme. It is this. There are those who say that, spiritually, men are not by nature very badly off, and that when the Bible insists on repentance and faith as the sole conditions of salvation, the expression is not to be taken literally. As men are not very bad by nature, they do not need a Saviour, and little anxiety need be felt about the matter any way.

Another class maintain that men by nature are very badly off; so badly that they are lost—that is, morally alienated from and opposed to God, through whose favour alone salvation can come. That a great change is needed, on the part of every soul, to fit it for heaven; that this change can be secured by accepting of

tain terms published in the Gospels, and in no other way ; and hence a most urgent duty rests upon every person to examine into the matter and make a positive decision.

Now there, in substance, are the two positions ; there are the two beliefs. Suppose that they are held in equal sincerity, and serve the influence of each upon the believer.

This is one of those fortunate methods of investigation where the inquirer can reach a conclusion as accurate as a mathematical definition. You all see, at a glance, what is the legitimate effect of each of these beliefs upon the mind and heart.

The tendency of the first is to remove all anxiety from the mind concerning one's own spiritual condition, or that of others, and lessen to a corresponding extent the motive to act. For no one will warn or entreat another, unless he is persuaded there is peril ahead. And it is the law, both of self-preservation and solicitude for others, that the effort put forth is commensurate with the felt imminence of the danger.

The legitimate result of the other belief upon the mind is to deepen the impression of danger, provoke investigation, and incite effort. And here, too, as the belief is sincerely held and the awful truth in its fulness apprehended, will the effort tally with the conviction. All missionary effort now being put forth in the world, all personal solicitude felt for friends, is inspired by this motive,—to save men from a threatening peril. There is not a prayer uttered, there is not a petition sent up to Heaven's throne, there is not an anxiety felt, there is not a loving endeavour made, for man's conversion, that has not this fear, this belief, for its parent and source. This, too, is the origin of that sublime motive which keeps the gospel ministry full of faithful labourers. Back of me, ever, as I speak to you, as a vast energy pushing me ever on, and holding me ever up, is the thought that many of you are in danger of living and dying unreconciled to God ; and that I am set to warn and persuade you, and bring you penitent and rejoicing to our common and loving Father's presence. Do you think that any young man of capacity—which always carries with it ambition—would deny himself the



honours, the possible wealth, and, what is stronger yet with men, the keen exhilaration of secular life, and devote himself to teaching men the way of salvation, unless he felt that men were in danger,—a danger from which he might possibly save them?

My friends, it is because I believe that many of you are in peril—the conviction that men were morally wrong by nature, and liable to make an eternal wreck of themselves, and that I might possibly, by God's aid, save some of them—that I put my foot on the dream of my life, and entered a profession which was by no means my first choice. It is this thought and hope which hold me to-day in a position which, left to my own inclination, I would that any other man filled. I dare to say that many a young man in the ministry wishes that he was pastor of a city church, and is planning for the day when he shall be. He knows nothing of what he desires. A city life, as many of you by dire experience know, is a grinding kind of life. It grinds the hope and life and vigour out of a man. It wrinkles the face, and whitens the head, and puts burdens upon men beyond what flesh and blood can bear. It taps and exhausts all the reserved forces of one's nature. It destroys all individuality, and makes a man to be no more than one ant amid countless numbers of its kind. And there are few of you who are under its influence, who feel the cruel and pitiless friction of its ponderous and ever-revolving pressure settling with every year more heavily upon you, as it revolves, but that long for the quiet and rest, the healthy toil, the broad scope and free air, of the country. And were it not for the duties and responsibilities which bind us here, many of us would break away and escape for ever from what we feel is slowly but surely killing us. The duty which brought and keeps me here is born of this thought, I say, that many in this city are morally in a wrong position, and that I must go as a brother, prompted by love, to tell them of their danger. I fear that many of you are not spiritually right and at peace with God; your lives are not such lives as you might live, and as you ought to live, and I am

l you of it, and warn you of a danger you do not see. s, there are gales on the ocean, and your ships are not or storm. You are blind to the lightning and deaf to mutterings of the thunder. The heavens are black heads, and the swell of a coming tempest begins to lf felt in your fears, and I charge you to seek of him who alone can walk the waters you soon ; who alone can break the bank which rolls up u black and heavy with destruction, and scatter it in st. There is but one safe pilot on the river of death : st. There is but one voice able to say to the elements eaten to engulf you, "Peace, be still!" It is the im who of old rebuked the Galilean surge. He who salvation to men who cannot be lost stultifies his ce, and spends his life for naught.

thus from several directions brought you down to a conclusion, and you see and say with me that it does st difference what a man believes. It makes a difference lice-officer, and with the merchant, and with the judge, . the preacher ; for it decides what his conduct and shall be. Back of all loose practice, and as a parent ou will find, by searching, a loose opinion. What we a spur to what we shall do, and all action is but : of previous decision.

his not true, of what value would education be? What matter whether we were educated rightly or wrongly? use would the mind itself be? Why carry so costly a eason, if it matters not whether we steer this way or

n our midst is a mighty force moving us as the wind e ship, and according to the direction and force of it are 1 to favour and fortune, or the reverse. We call it public

It is mightier than law ; for it can take the strongest law ever enacted, and make it of no more account than f parchment, that a child can tear with its fingers and e winds. It is mightier than governments ; for it can

level thrones and change constitutions. It is mightier than all armies; for it speaks, and at its word armies melt away,—one returning to his shop, another to his farm, and another to his merchandise. Yea, it is mightier than the church itself; for creeds and covenants yield to its touch, and orders, sacred with the sanction of centuries, at its command yield their existence and pass for ever away. But what is public opinion, and of what is its mighty energy composed? It is made up, my friend, in part of what you and I think. There is not a vibration in the air but that can contribute something to the hurricane, and make its rush fiercer and its roar more to be dreaded. There is not a single beam of all the myriads that the sun sends out that does not increase our comfort, and make the earth healthier and happier. And so there is not a thought of our minds, there is not a dream of our life, there is not a word of our lips, which does not enter that vast volume of power called public opinion,—enter to make it stronger for good or for evil. It is a question of public importance, therefore, what you and I believe. It affects society and the world at large. It affects men's lives here and their destiny hereafter, what we think of the Bible and of Christ, who in it is called the Lord and Saviour of all. I wish you to understand, therefore, that, in the long run, neither your own acts nor the acts of those whom you influence will be better in character than your thoughts. If you are mean and bigoted and envious and spiteful in your thoughts of men, you will very likely be the same in your acts toward them. If you are a business-man, and dishonest in trade, you are educating all your clerks in dishonesty, and doing all you can to degrade and debauch business in this city, and people it with dishonest tradesmen ten years from now. You are not only giving a bad character to the city to-day, but deciding that it shall continue bad. And now what need I say further? You came here to be taught and quickened in mind and heart, and I have done what I might to help you touching the matter discussed. I dare say that some of you do not always agree with me, and that you who do not are sometimes in the right;

t this does not stir a ripple of fear as to the result. For the more men who are striving to grow in the understanding of every duty, and to get at the root of things,—the more such men think and investigate, the nearer will they come together; for truth is a fixed point, and all who seek it—no matter how widely they be apart—must inevitably converge. The people who butt against each other are those who run about indfold.

And now, friends, you who are of like theological opinions with myself, know this, that the great lesson for us to learn is, how to express more of Christian spirit in our acts. We are to let the world, we are to let this city, see, not what our faith is, or what our works are, but how our faith works with our works, and is to them what the sun is to the rose,—the source of its colour and fragrance. I am convinced more and more, that it is not by logic and argument and verbal demonstration that Christ is to be set forth to the intellect and heart and conscience of this city. Nor by denunciation and pharisaical censure can ignorance be enlightened, and enmity converted to friendship. We must raise the level of our lives; we must widen and deepen the channel of sympathy for man; we must act that Christ shall have, as it were, a second incarnation in our own persons,—or ever that banner, which is white as an angel's wing, lifted by universal suffrage here, shall wave unchallenged over all. If evangelical doctrines are better than other doctrines, then should the lives of those who hold them be better, their charity wider, their love for man warmer, their ideal greater, and their acts, more than the acts of other men, such as his to whom they claim to have come nearer in the understanding of his truth. To this test, I warn you, evangelical religion must eventually come for measurement. In this lance, before its adherents and opponents, I confess it is not that it shall be weighed. For the resources of statement were exhausted centuries ago, when Christ declared, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Here and with this plummet, then, we at last touch bottom.

Before such a demonstration of the value of our belief, *et* could not live. So far as it ~~was~~ honest, it would be converted so far as it was only cunning and wickedness, it would be detected and despised. Let that religion which is the quick to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to enlighten ignorance to lift the fallen, to cheer the hopeless, and which has the charity toward its enemies, be the future religion of this world. Write it over the doors of all your churches in characters that shall never fade; print it as the caption of every profession of faith; teach it to your children; proclaim it to the winds; charge them to bear it to every land,—that hereafter in the world he who loveth man the best is the truest disciple of Christ, the best representative of God. Let this be our creed; and invoke this as the final test, in the years ahead of our faith.

## THE ORIGINAL AND THE ACTUAL RELATION OF MAN TO LAW.

BY REV. DR. W. G. T. SHEDD.

ROMANS vii. 10.--"*The commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death.*"

THE reader of St. Paul's epistles is struck with the seemingly disparaging manner in which he speaks of the moral law. In one place he tells his reader that "the law entered that the offence might abound;" in another, that "the law worketh wrath;" in another, that "sin shall not have dominion" over the believer because he is "not under the law;" in another, that Christians "are become dead to the law;" in another, that "they are delivered from the law;" and in another, that "the strength of sin is the law." This phraseology sounds strangely respecting that great commandment upon which the whole moral government of God is founded. We are in the habit of supposing that nothing that springs from the Divine law, or is in any way connected with it, can be evil or the occasion of evil. If the law of holiness is the strength of sin; if it worketh wrath; if good men are to be delivered from it; what, then, shall be said of the law of sin? Why is it that St. Paul, in a certain class of his representations, appears to be inimical to the ten commandments, and to warn Christians against them? "Is the law sin?" is a question that very naturally arises, while reading some of his statements; and it is a question which he himself asks,

because he is aware that it will be likely to start in the mind of some of his readers. And it is a question to which he replies: "God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law."

The difficulty is only seeming, and not real. These apparently disparaging representations of the moral law are perfectly reconcilable with that profound reverence for its authority which St. Paul felt and exhibited, and with that solemn and cogent preaching of the law for which he was so distinguished. The text explains and resolves the difficulty. "The commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." The moral law, in its own nature, and by the divine ordination, is suited to produce holiness and happiness in the soul of any and every man. It was ordained to life. So far as the purpose of God, and the original nature and character of man, are concerned, the ten commandments are perfectly adapted to fill the soul with peace and purity. In the unfallen creature they work no wrath, neither are they the strength of sin. If everything in man had remained as it was created, there would have been no need of urging him to "become dead to the law," to be "delivered from the law," and not be "under the law." Had man kept his original righteousness, it could never be said of him that "the strength of sin is the law." On the contrary, there was such a mutual agreement between the unfallen nature of man and the holy law of God, that the latter was the very joy and strength of the former. The commandment was ordained to life, and it was the life and peace of holy Adam.

The original relation between man's nature and the moral law was precisely like that between material nature and the material laws. There has been no apostasy in the system of matter, and all things remain there as they were in the beginning of creation. The law of gravitation, this very instant, rules as peacefully and supremely in every atom of matter as it did on the morning of creation. Should material nature be "delivered" from the law of gravitation, chaos would come again. No portion of this fair and beautiful natural world needs to become "dead" to the laws of nature. Such phraseology as this is inapplicable to

elation that exists between the world of matter and the n of material laws, because, in this material sphere, there are no revolution, no rebellion, no great catastrophe analogous to the fall of Adam. The law here was ordained to life, the ordinance still stands. And it shall stand until, by the will of the Creator, these elements shall melt with fervent heat, these heavens shall pass away with a great noise; until a new system of nature, and a new legislation for it, are introduced. The case is different with man. He is not standing where he was when created. He is out of his original relations to the divine government of God, and therefore that which was ordained to him for life, he now finds to be unto death. The law which in its own nature is suited to minister to the health and strength of the well man, becomes poison and death itself to the sick man.

In this brief notice of the fact that the law of God was ordained to life, and that therefore this disparaging phraseology of Paul does not refer to the intrinsic nature of law, which expressly informs us "is holy, just, and good," nor to the actual relation which man sustained to it before he became a sinner, let us now proceed to consider some particulars in which the commandment is found to be unto death to every sinful man. The law of God shows itself in the human soul, in the form of the sense of duty. Every man, as he walks the streets, and is engaged in the business or pleasures of life, hears occasionally the voice of duty: "Thou shalt; thou shalt not." Every man, as he goes along in this earthly pilgrimage, finds himself saying to himself: "I ought, I ought not." This is the voice of law speaking in the conscience; and every man may know, whenever he hears these words, that he is listening to the same authority that engraved the ten commandments into the stones of Sinai, and sounded the awful trumpet, and will one day come in power and great glory to judge the quick and dead. Law, we say, expresses the sense of duty for man, while here upon earth, through the sense of duty. The sense of duty pursues us ever," said Webster, in that impressive allusion to the workings of conscience, in the trial of the



Salem murderers. This is the accusing and condemning sensation in and by which the written statute of God becomes a living energy, and a startling voice in the soul. Cut into the rock of Sinai, it is a dead letter; written and printed in our Bibles, it is still a dead letter; but wrought in this manner into the fabric of our own constitution, waylaying us in our hours of weakness, and irresolution, and secrecy, and speaking to our inward being in tones that are as startling as any that could be addressed to the physical ear—undergoing this transmutation, and becoming a continual consciousness of duty and obligation, the law of God is more than a letter. It is a possessing spirit, and according as we obey or disobey, it is a guardian angel, or a tormenting fiend. We have disobeyed, and therefore the sense of duty is a tormenting sensation; the commandment which was ordained to life, is found to be unto death.

1. In the first place, to go into the analysis, the sense of duty is a sorrow and a pain to sinful man, because it *places him under a continual restraint*.

No creature can be happy so long as he feels himself under limitations. To be checked, reined in, and thwarted in any way, renders a man uneasy and discontented. The universal and instinctive desire for freedom,—freedom from restraint,—is a proof of this. Every creature wishes to follow out his inclination, and in proportion as he is hindered in so doing, and is compelled to work counter to it, he is restless and dissatisfied.

Now, the sense of duty exerts just this influence upon sinful man. It opposes his wishes; it thwarts his inclination; it imposes a restraint upon his spontaneous desires and appetites. It continually hedges up his way, and seeks to stop him in the path of his choice and his pleasure. If his inclination were only in harmony with his duty; if his desires and affections were one with the law of God; there would be no restraint from the law. In this case, the sense of duty would be a joy, and not a sorrow, because, in doing his duty, he would be doing what he liked. There are only two ways whereby contentment can be introduced into the human soul. If the Divine law could be altered

it should agree with man's sinful inclination, he could be in sin. The commandment having become like his own here would, of course, be no conflict between the two, might sin on for ever and lap himself in Elysium. And tedly there are thousands of luxurious and guilty men, they could, like the Eastern Semiramis, would make law alike in their decree; would transmute the law of into a law of sin; would put evil for good, and good for for sweet, and sweet for bitter; in order to be eternally in the sin that they love. They would bring duty and ion into harmony, by a method that would annihilate ould annihilate the eternal distinction between right and would annihilate God himself. But this method, of is impossible. There can be no transmutation of law, there can be of a creature's character and inclination. and earth shall pass away, but the commandment of a never pass away. The only other mode, therefore, by duty and inclination can be brought into agreement, and tinual sense of restraint which renders man so wretched oved, is to change the inclination. The instant the and affections of our hearts are transformed, so that they with the Divine law, the conflict between our will and science is at an end. When I come to love the law of s and delight in it, to obey it is simply to follow out my ion. And this, we have seen, is to be happy.

such is not the state of things in the unrenewed soul. nd inclination are in conflict. Man's desires, appetites, dencies are in one direction, and his conscience is in the

The sense of duty holds a whip over him. He yields to ful inclination, finds a momentary pleasure in so doing, n feels the stings of the scorpion-lash. We see this on in a very plain and striking manner if we select an e where the appetite is very strong, and the voice of ace is very loud. Take, for example, that particular sin most easily besets an individual. Every man has such a i knows what it is. Let him call to mind the innumer-

able instances in which that particular temptation has assailed him, and he will be startled to discover how many thousands of times the sense of duty has put a restraint upon him. Though not in every single instance, yet in hundreds and hundreds of cases the law of God has uttered the, "Thou shalt not," and endeavoured to prevent the consummation of that sin. And what a wearisome experience is this!—a continual forth-putting of an unlawful desire, and an almost incessant check upon it from a law which is hated, but which is feared; for such is the attitude of the natural heart toward the commandment. "The carnal mind is enmity against the law of God." The two are contrary to one another, so that when the heart goes out in its inclination, it is immediately hindered and opposed by the law. Sometimes the collision between them is terrible, and the soul becomes an arena of tumultuous passions. The heart and will are intensely determined to do wrong, while the conscience is unyielding and uncompromising, and utters its denunciations, and thunders its warnings. And what a dreadful destiny awaits that soul in whom this conflict and collision between the dictates of conscience and the desires of the heart are to be eternal; for whom, through all eternity, the holy law of God, which was ordained to life, peace, and joy, shall be found to be unto death and woe immeasurable!

2. In the second place, the sense of duty is a pain and sorrow to a sinful man, because it *demand*s a *perpetual effort* from him.

No creature likes to tug and to lift. Service must be easy, in order to be happy. If you lay upon the shoulders of a labourer a burden that strains his muscles almost to the point of rupture, you put him in physical pain. His physical structure was not intended to be subjected to such a stretch. His Creator designed that the burden should be proportioned to the power in such a manner that work should be play. In the garden of Eden, physical labour was physical pleasure, because the powers were in healthy action, and the work assigned to them was not a burden. Before the fall, man was simply to dress

keep a garden; but after the fall he was to dig up thorns and thistles, and eat his bread in the sweat of his face. This is the curse—the curse of being compelled to toil, and lift, and put muscle to such a tension that it aches. This is not the ideal and happy condition of the body in which man was created. Look at the toiling millions of the human family, like the poor ant, “for one small grain, labour, and tug, and strive;” see them bending double, under the heavy weary burden which they must carry until relieved by death; and tell me this is the physical elysium, the earthly paradise, in which unfallen man was originally placed, and for which he was originally designed. No, the curse of labour, of perpetual strain has fallen upon the body, as the curse of death has fallen upon the soul; and the uneasiness and unrest of the groaning and struggling body is a convincing proof of it. The whole moral nature of man groaneth and travaileth in pain together now, waiting for the adoption—that is, the redemption of the body from this penal necessity of perpetual strain and effort.

The same fact meets us when we pass from the physical to the moral nature of man, and becomes much more sad and impressive. By creation it was a pleasure and a pastime for man to keep the law of God, to do spiritual work. As it was, he was not compelled to summon his energies, and exert his will, and make a convulsive resolution to obey the commands of his Maker. Obedience was joy. Holy Adam required nothing of effort in the path of duty. It was a smooth and broad pathway, fringed with flowers, and leading into the bosoms of asphodel. It did not become the “straight and narrow” way until sin had made obedience a toil, the sense of duty a restraint, and human life a race and a fight. By the fall, the obligation to keep the Divine law perfectly became impossible. It was no longer easy for man to do right, and it has never been easy or spontaneous to him since. Hence the duty to follow the dictates of conscience always costs an unregenerate man an effort. He is compelled to make a resolution, and a resolution is the sign and signal of a difficult and

unwelcome service. Take your own experience for an illustration. Did you ever, except as you were sweetly inclined and drawn by the renewing grace of God, attempt to discharge a duty, without discovering that you were averse to it, and that you must gather up your energies for the work, as the leaper strains upon the tendon of Achilles to make the mortal leap? And if you had not become weary, and given over the effort; if you had entered upon that sad but salutary passage in the religious experience which is delineated in the seventh chapter of Romans; if you had continued to struggle and strive to do your duty, until you grew faint and weak, and powerless, and cried out for a higher and mightier power to succour you; you would have known, as you do not yet, what a deadly opposition there is between the carnal mind and the law of God, and what a spasmodic effort it costs an unrenewed man even to attempt to discharge the innumerable obligations that rest upon him. Mankind would know more of this species of toil and labour, and of the cleaving curse involved in it, if they were under the same physical necessity in regard to it that they lie under in respect to manual labour. A man must dig up the thorns and thistles, and must earn his bread in the sweat of his face, or he must die. Physical wants, hunger and thirst, set men to work physically, and keep them at it; and thus they well understand what it is to have a weary body, aching muscles, and a tired physical nature. But they are not under the same species of necessity in respect to the wants and the work of the soul. A man may neglect these, and yet live a long and luxurious life upon the earth. He is not driven by the very force of circumstances to labour with his heart and will, as he is to labour with his hands. And hence he knows little or nothing of a weary and heavy-laden soul; nothing of an aching heart and a tired will. He well knows how much strain and effort it costs to cut down forests, open roads, and reduce the wilderness to a fertile field; but he does not know how much toil and effort are involved in the attempt to convert the human soul into the garden of the Lord.

in this demand for a perpetual effort which is made upon natural man by the sense of duty, we see that the law was ordained to life is found to be unto death. The commandment, instead of being a pleasant friend and companion to the human soul, as it was in the beginning, has become a rigorous task-master. It lays out an uncongenial work for man to do, and threatens him with punishment if he does not do it. And yet the law is not a tyrant. Holy, just, and good. This work which it lays out is his work, and ought to be done. The wicked disinclination and aversion of the sinner have compelled the law to this unwelcome and threatening attitude. That which was not made death to man by God's agency, and by a special arrangement, but by man's transgression (Romans vii. 5). Sin produces this misery in the human soul through the instrument that is innocent, and in its own nature benevolent. And apostasy, the rebellion and corruption of the human race has converted the law of God into an exacting taskmaster and avenging magistrate. For the law says to every man that he must do it. Paul says of the magistrate: "Rulers are not a terror to the good, but to the evil. Wilt thou, then, not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good: if thou do that which is evil, be afraid." If man were only obedient to the law; if the inclination of his heart were only in conformity with his sense of duty; the ten commandments would not be accompanied with any thunders or lightnings, and the discharge of duty would be as easy, spontaneous, and as without effort, as the practice of sin now is.

Now have we considered two particulars in which the Divine law, originally intended to render man happy, and intrinsically good, now renders him miserable. The commandment which was ordained to life, he now finds to be unto death, and it places him under a continual restraint, and drives him to perpetual effort. These two particulars, we need not say, are all the modes in which sin has converted the moral law

from a joy to a sorrow. We have not discussed the great subject of guilt and penalty. This violated law charges home the past disobedience and threatens an everlasting damnation, and thus fills the sinful soul with fears and forebodings. In this way, also, the law becomes a terrible organ and instrument of misery, and is found to be unto death. But the limits of this discourse compel us to stop the discussion here, and to deduce some practical lessons which are suggested by it.

1. In the first place, we are taught by the subject, as thus considered, that the mere sense of duty is not Christianity. If this is all that a man is possessed of, he is not prepared for the day of judgment and the future life. For the sense of duty, alone and by itself, causes misery in a soul that has not performed its duty. The law worketh wrath in a creature who has not obeyed the law. The man that doeth these things shall indeed live by them; but he who has not done them must die by them.

There have been, and still are, great mistakes made at this point. Men have supposed that an active conscience and a lofty susceptibility towards right and wrong will fit them to appear before God, and have, therefore, rejected Christ the Propitiation. They have substituted ethics for the Gospel, natural religion for revealed. "I know," says Immanuel Kant, "of but two beautiful things: the starry heavens above my head, and the sense of duty within my heart." But is the sense of duty beautiful to apostate man—to a being who is not conformed to it? Does the holy law of God overarch him like the firmament, "tinged with a blue of heavenly dye, and starred with sparkling gold"? Nay, nay. If there be any beauty in the condemning law of God for man the transgressor, it is the beauty of the lightnings. There is a splendour in them, but there is a terror also. Not until he who is the end of the law for righteousness has clothed me with his panoply, and shielded me from their glittering shafts in the clefts of the Rock, do I dare to look at them as they leap from crag to crag, and shine from the east even unto the west.

We do not deny that the consciousness of responsibility is a

ne, and are by no means insensible to the grand and  
 ; sentiments concerning the moral law and human duty  
 1 this noble thinker gives utterance. But we are certain  
 he sense of duty had pressed upon him to the degree that  
 pon St. Paul—had the commandment “come” to him  
 e convicting energy that it did to St. Augustine and to  
 -he, too, would have discovered that the law which was  
 l to life is found to be unto death. So long as man stands  
 ance from the moral law, he can admire its glory and its

but when it comes close to him, when it comes home to  
 en it becomes a discerner of the thoughts and intents of  
 rt, then its glory is swallowed up in its terror, and its  
 is lost in its truth; then he who was alive without the  
 comes slain by the law; then this ethical admiration of  
 alogue is exchanged for an evangelical trust in Jesus

id this leads us to remark, in the second place, that this  
 shows the meaning of Christ’s work of redemption. The  
 an alienated and corrupt soul is a burden. It cannot  
 wise, for it imposes a perpetual restraint, urges up to  
 elcome duty, and charges home a fearful guilt. Christ  
 named the Redeemer, because he frees the sinful soul  
 this. He delivers it from the penalty by assuming it  
 n himself, and making complete satisfaction to the  
 law. He delivers it from the perpetual restraint and  
 ome effort by so renewing and changing the heart that  
 es a delight to keep the law. We observed, in the first  
 he discourse, that if man could only bring the inclination  
 eart into agreement with his sense of duty, he would  
 y in obeying, and the consciousness of restraint and of  
 effort would disappear. This is precisely what Christ  
 shes by his Spirit. He brings the human heart into  
 r with the divine law, as it was in the beginning, and  
 scues it from its bondage and its toil. Obedience  
 a pleasure, and the service of God the highest Christian

Oh! would that by the act of faith you might



experience this liberating effect of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. So long as you are out of Christ, you are under a burden that will every day grow heavier, and may prove to be fixed and unremovable as the mountains. That is a fearful punishment which the poet Dante represents as being inflicted upon those who were guilty of pride. The poor wretches are compelled to support enormous masses of stone, which bend them over to the ground, and, in his own stern phrase, "crumple up their knees into their breasts." Thus they stand, stooping over, every muscle trembling, the heavy stone weighing them down, and yet they are not permitted to fall and rest themselves upon the earth. In this crouching posture they must carry the weary, heavy load without relief, and with a distress so great that, in the poet's own language,

"It seemed

As he who showed most patience in his look

Wailing exclaimed: I can endure no more."

Such is the posture of man unredeemed. There is a burden on him under which he stoops and crouches. It is a burden compounded of guilt and corruption. It is lifted off by Christ, and by Christ only. The soul itself can never expiate its guilt—can never cleanse its pollution. We urge you once more to the act of faith in the Redeemer of the world. We beseech you once more to make "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" your own. The instant you plead the merit of Christ's oblation, in simple confidence in its atoning efficacy, that instant the heavy burden is lifted off by an Almighty Hand, and your curved, stooping, trembling, aching form once more stands erect, and you walk abroad in the liberty wherewith Christ makes the human creature free.

## WINGS.

BY REV. HORATIO N. POWERS.

*"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles."*—ISAIAH xl. 31.

**T**HE real marrow of life is in its higher experiences. The exultant moods are always the most joyous. We manage to endure a great deal that is disagreeable and depressing, if now and then come seasons of spiritual uplifting, moments of soul-glow and sunrise, when we are translated from the low flats of a dull earthly monotony to higher levels and better fellowships.

"They shall mount up on wings as eagles," says the Prophet. This is our privilege. The soul is free. It has wings in the joy of pure emotion, in the upspringing might of faith, in the ardour of heavenly aspiration, in the swift flight of love, in the liberty of exultant hope.

With some these wings are often folded. They droop often through sheer weariness. They trail frequently in the dust. But again they shine in the clear air of cerulean heights. The sunlight of truth is on them. On their strong pinions life is held above defeats and woe. Making ample allowance for differences in temperament, and scope of thought in individuals, the devout nature is not ignorant of blessed experiences that impel the soul onward—sympathies, insights, ardours—re-

freshing and enriching to the hidden life. A few hints will awaken precious memories.

You remember how the spring odours of the tender-leaved woods seized your finer sense as you came forth from the place of prayer, and wafted your thought to the trees of Paradise; and how, on the billowy splendours of indescribable sunsets, you were borne to the gates of light, which seemed uplifted, as if to welcome the King of Glory; and how, on the mountain-top, as day flung its roses over the sky, and kissed the wide waters to crimson, you were born afar; and how, awed and ravished beneath the midnight stars, you seemed to wander through the eternal deeps amid the blossoming constellations, until you almost heard the sphery harmony, and touched the uncreated throne! More than once, in the solitude and by the sea, amid the noon's delicious peacefulness, and when the fresh winds blew health and music out of the west, over leagues of prairie, starred with unnumbered flowers, your heart overran with sacred emotion, and expanded to embrace the beautiful repose! Wings were yours.

Then, too, after a season of spiritual depression, where you had gone mournfully with a sense of barrenness and burden, the painful spell was finally broken, and you seemed set in "a large place." Aye, your soul bounded outward into blessed light. Great freedom was yours, and you wondered why such doubt could have fettered the faith that now exults in the joyful confidence of a son beloved. And so, too, when the news of that dear friend's espousal of Christ reached you; when the darling child of many prayers went with you, for the first time, to the table of the Lord; when the prodigal, who had made the house so sorrowful, came back with the glow of forgiveness on his brow; and when, gathered around the old hearth-stone, at the family festival, the unutterable peace of God came down—on what gracious wings were you upborne! What refreshing renewal was yours!

You remember how, before now, you have come into the church, heavy, gloomy, discouraged, an evil world shadowing

hope, and life looking sepulchral and poor amid earth's  
 , and changes, and delusions, and how hymn, and psalm,  
 onfession, and prayer, have little by little stolen away your  
 t, and then how the word of grace uttered from the depths  
 rophetic soul flowed with healing, and light, and comfort, to  
 heart, and how, on the wings of its benediction, you rose up  
 ger and clearer visioned, and went forth as on the landscape  
 etter world.

d so when the evil spirit of wrath and revenge was cast from  
 and self conquered in granting forgiveness that linked your  
 closer bonds to one estranged; when, bowing in the great  
 vgration where a thousand hearts went up in importunate  
 ication, or in triumphant *Te Deums* stormed heaven with  
 , you rose on the wave of devotion, and when all at once the  
 cendent vision of Love incarnate and on the cross burst with  
 rious glory on your soul, then there was no dull plodding in  
 ay—pinions were at your feet.

t it is in the closet, if you live nobly, that your strength is  
 graciously renewed. There, with the world put away,  
 faith resting serenely on the promise, while the place  
 ed instinct with a hallowing presence, you waited for your  
 . Nay, you waited with your Lord, for he came in and  
 ed with you, and you with him. On him you emptied all  
 burdens and your sins. It was enough to feel the pulses of  
 eerless love, to see life's consummate ideal met in his per-  
 on, enough to see every thorn of his crown of suffering  
 om into celestial anadems, and to rest without a doubt in  
 abernacle of his peace. Perhaps you are one who, in the  
 lrous disclosures of these hours, can say, "Whether in the  
 , or out of the body, I cannot tell."

e give grudgingly, we labour in heaviness, we minister  
 fully, we worship coldly, we live meanly, until the higher  
 s begotten within us—until the soul gets a glow, and an  
 atness, and a breadth of sympathy, and an impulse of high  
 pure aspirations, that make it a joy to do good. Love  
 ways winged. If you would conquer your besetments, rise

to a more gracious benevolence, enjoy a livelier consciousness of eternal things, and have your Christian duties delightful; get the ardent, unselfish, consecrated heart of love, through the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Inspirer and Comforter.

It were easy to picture more in detail instances of these spiritual upliftings in the fervour of your first discipleship, in times of blessed awakening in the churches, and in all your most precious experiences. But these are all revived as you recall the bright places of your pilgrimage. Through their impulse you have done your most genuine work for Christ, have had the clearest glimpses of the heavenly beatitude, and have gathered the choicest fruits of holiness. These experiences give the lie to an atheistic materialism. They strangle doubts of our immortality. They attest our divine relationship. In these illuminations the letter of Scripture delivers a grander and more inspiring meaning. In them we antedate the everlasting life.

## OUR HOPE IN CHRIST.

BY REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*"Christ in you the hope of glory."*—COLOSSIANS i. 27.

**T**HIS expression is fragmentary, and yet it embraces a full and complete thought. The whole sentence is a long one, and, like many sentences in Paul's writings, it is complex. The Apostle has been speaking of Christ, who he was, what he was; of the Gospel, the preaching of which had been committed to him. This Gospel in its universality, designed for Gentiles as well as for Jews, had not been through antecedent ages comprehended. How the Gentiles were to be partakers of it had been a mystery, but is now a mystery no longer, being made manifest to the saints, to whom those among the Gentiles as well as others, God would make known what the glorious riches of this mystery is; and this is what it is: "Christ in you the hope of glory;" or, as some translate it, "Christ among you the hope of glory"—either one, for he cannot be among us except as he is in us.

What Christ was to the saints of St. Paul's time, that he has been to the saints of all time. That he must be to us, if we are saints, or are ever to be saints, "our hope of glory."

Though in the Christian church there is much said of Christ, of the Christian hope, and of the future glory, it may, upon calm reflection, be reasonably doubted whether the majority of Christians have any definite practical apprehension of either

expression. When we speak of Christ our ideas are too often limited to a strange individual who lived two thousand years ago—walked amid the people of Judea, did many merciful works, and was finally crucified for human good. We do not understand by the word "Christ" all that in the eternal nature of things is anointed, sacred, wise, and that Jesus was Christ, because that was in him. We do not understand that it expresses an essence, a character, an incarnation of God—*i.e.*, of goodness—of all that is divine; that without which immortality cannot be divine. When we speak of hope, or hear it spoken of, the idea we attach to it is too often not an idea. So far as it expresses anything to us, it expresses simply what we wish for; rather, what we think might be desirable. So far as it assumes any shape at all, it is that of an object away off in the distance, toward which we trust some lucky current will drift us. It is the distant city we expect to reach without taking the train. It is the fortune we expect to enjoy without one act of industry to gain it. It is the commanding position of the scholar without a day's study between. This is not hope, except it be the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish. True hope is never indefinite. It may see the ultimate object as through a telescope dimly, but it knows where it is. It sees it as the boy toiling through the cube root or quadratics sees the calculus. It sees not so much it, as the steps it takes to get to it. True hope is not something away off, but something here. It is the penny that is to become the pound. It is the sapling that is to become the oak. It is the student that is to become the sage. True hope is the thing you hope for in development. The farmer hopes for a crop when he has sown the seed, and sees it growing. When blight overtakes it and it ceases to grow, his hope dies. When we think of glory, perhaps there are few thoughts in which we stray further from a wise conception. No man's ideal can be higher than the man. I do not mean the man in his practice, because most men fall below their ideal, but the man in his true manhood. Your moral heroism will always be proportioned to your moral elevation. The Mohammedan has his ideal

of glory. The Hindoo has his. We have ours. From careful observation you will derive the fact that the majority of Christians conceive of future glory as constituted mainly of a place. The future glory is to be mainly material: harps, crowns, thrones, dresses, idleness, luxury, nothingness. Few of us get beyond the sign to the thing signified. Your servant thinks that dress can make a lady. The vulgar imagine that carpets and mirrors make a home. We imagine that heaven is a large store-house filled with trinkets and robes. When we die we have only to enter the palace of immortality and be clothed. We do not see the palace we are in now; the material which lies around us—all of it ours; the fabrics of knowledge, wisdom, purity, and love we are to weave; that they who enter the glorious immortality, or the immortal glory, are they who come there clothed, and not to be clothed. The true glory is not material. There is enough that is material, but it is not built up of dead stones by a dead art. It is a universe of worlds—of order, of light, of beauty. Trees and flowers and song—all these are there, but they are not the glory. They are here, too. They are only the fabric out of which we are to weave our glorious garments. Soul is there—virtue, righteousness, usefulness, love is there; knowledge, the ear that hears, the eye that sees, that is glory—glory that thrills the soul with joy; that makes immortality blissful, that is glory. Every grace, humility, power to impart, riches that are like the exhaustless love of Christ teeming with blessing; that is the glory. No sigh is there, no tear, no death, no grave; because no soul is there to make a sigh, or tear, or death, or grave. That is the glory. Glory is getting rid of unglory. Glory is capacity, culture. Our local habitation may be upon this planet, or upon some chosen star; but without these we shall not see God—there can be for us no glory. You have the pattern of this glory in Jesus Christ, and hope is the stairs along which you every day take a step to the true glory. “Christ in you the hope of glory.” Christ in you the ideal of glory—the pattern of glory. Our Gospel is the only thing upon earth that furnishes such a pattern.



God did not intend that there should be to us any indefiniteness in any of his works. In all he has done there is a spirit—a meaning, beyond the letter or the mere act, or the thing in which the expression consists. He desired that we should know him. A revelation of him is not in Moses—not in the prophets, not in philosophers, not in nature. Moses and the prophets only reveal a coming revealer. Philosophers only tell us a revealer is needed. Nature is only the house in which the Deity resides. There is a sense in which all these reveal God. The house suggests a tenant. The philosopher infers the kind of tenant. They (*i.e.*, these philosophers) are not contrary to, but are only another degree of, Moses and the prophets who have inquired more directly of God, and caught some glimpses of his being. The wise men of Persia know more of God than the high priest at Jerusalem. God wishes to reveal himself. But what is he? Not a tangible form with the properties and accidents of matter. There may be somewhere such a form, but we cannot conceive of it. God is intelligence, God is law, God is power, God is love; he is all these and more, yet not in mere abstractions. He governs worlds, but he moulds a flower or listens to a child. God's perfection in the whole universe is that he is in every atom of the universe. He is greatest in the universe, only because he is servant to every part of that universe. In him, not only we, but everything else, has its being. His being is the essential element to all other being. He keeps the house in repair. He is preserver as well as builder. But his moral beings—such is moral nature—have well being, only as they in a higher sense partake of God—assimilate God. Without his attributes God could not be God. Without partaking of those attributes we cannot be children of God. God is not Deity because he is supreme, but he is supreme because he is Deity. The universe demands that God or goodness must be supreme. They are children of God who, not from any unnatural and impossible election, or who, from belonging to a human family or nationality, or who from an attachment to a given church or organization, vote themselves to be such; but those of the universal family—*of any church* who have that which resembles God, those who

and somewhat the elements of holiness. Without this we cannot see the Lord.

God assumed the form and condition of humanity. By means of the vicissitudes to which humanity is subjected, he demonstrated the reality of goodness. In demonstrating it he expressed for us a goodness is—not conformity with our defects, but conformity with wisdom, truth, purity, and love. What he was in his humanity, God wants us to be. They who are imitators of what he was, are the children of God; not they who call him Lord, but they who do what he has bidden. Those who were in this humanity shall some time or other become.

our Father's promise. This is the force of that word, "I will rule to the ends of the earth." At his name every knee shall bow; not, as we imagine, that men are to reverence him, but that they shall be the thing he showed them how to be. That will be the reverence God requires; the thing, not the shadow of it. What he was the real children of God do become. Do not say that you or I become that, but God's true children are that. This is the force of those expressions which represent him as advocating us before God. If he brought us to us, he carried manhood to God. If he pleaded our cause before us, he pleads our cause before God. As he lived his life before us, "This is God," so he says in his living God, "This is man." Have patience with humanity—

that. It is not so much the human form that is there, as man nature. It was not so much the divine form that was there, as the divine nature. What Jesus is, his humanity is. In what time and grace shall we make humanity. One by one we are becoming believers—that is, beings who see divine things and are transformed thereto. You or I may not be of the number. There are many deceptions, but the kingdom is not in the show, the pretension that is upon the face of the world—but in the obscurity, the tribulation, the persecution, which we too often think not to be of the kingdom at all. That kingdom is growing—not by obser-

vation—*i.e.*, by that toward which men most direct their observation.

Now, what was Christ? I cannot tell you. Paul cannot tell us. An angel could not tell you. I cannot tell you what any essence is. I cannot tell you what skill is. You can see it, if you have an eye to see it. I cannot tell you what genius is. You can see it, if you know how to see it. Time itself will not tell us what Christ is. They alone know him who dwell much with him, who have ears to hear and eyes to see. "In him all fulness dwells." Paul tries to tell us—"He is the image of the invisible God"—the reflection—the best portraiture that can be made. "In him were hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." "He is wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." He was all this for us, for all men. When we read this, we think all we have to do is to confess that it is true, and by-and-by, after death, he will present himself this in our stead; and sometimes we call that faith. This is our mistake—great mistake. He is this to them that believe. And some people think the Christian does the race injustice in making the limitation; and when you show it to them in the Bible they say, then God is unjust. You see, then, how it defines who the believer is. He is the believer who, through Christ, studying him, dwelling with him, becomes wise, and righteous, and sanctified, and emancipated from sin. Our colleges are to us Latin, and Greek, and mathematics, and science. But to whom are they Latin, and Greek, and mathematics, and science? Why, to those who by means of them acquire Latin, and Greek, and mathematics, and science. They do not keep anybody out, and yet there are millions to whom they are nothing. Christ was love, and goodness, and usefulness. Christ was simplicity, and humility, and purity. Christ was natural, without pretension, and modest. Positively and negatively, he was innocence, and virtue, and service. He was, beside this, knowledge and power. Knowledge or intellect grows out of morals naturally. The nation which has the highest moral culture will, of necessity, have the highest intel-

actual development. To do God's will is to know all doctrine. And, for aught we know, all power as naturally grows out of knowledge. There is much in nature to indicate that it does. This Christ suggests heaven. Imagine a community of beings like Christ, and you get your highest conception of heaven. In such thoughts as these, the promises of God become luminous to us. In such thoughts as these, you see why the promises are limited to the believer—not to you and me, that assume to be believers, but to the true believer. In such thoughts as these, many words of Christ find explanation. "Lay up treasure in heaven." "He that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, is a wise man." "In doing God's will to the very least of his creatures, is doing it to him." Believing in Christ means something. "You are my disciples if you do whatsoever I command you,"—not otherwise. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." It is the heart to do, God wants us to have. This Christ is the most glorious being the human mind has ever been called to contemplate. Whatever of excellence, whatever of virtue, whatever is lovely or of good report, is in him. Science, peace, harmony, time to think and understand the universe, heart to comprehend and beat to heart, love that rejoices in loving, all that is there, without a limitation of alloy or artifice, of time or space. All that is there is glory, are, perfect, eternal. That is in Christ. He is the believer's hope of glory, his ideal.

Into this God desires us to be transformed. For this cause Christ is come, to destroy the works of the Devil, and make us sons of God—to root them out of us, and enthrone the works of righteousness.

It is a law of our moral being, that we grow into a likeness of that we set our heart upon. So far as is possible, we grow into the very thing. Find out a man's ideal, and you find out the man. Time does not permit us to enter upon this subject, for it is one of wide extent; but you have observed the miser carries his misery even in his face. The soul transforms even the body. He who hates petrifies into hatred. It matters not

whether the object hated is worthy of hatred or not. If you hate your enemy even, in the sight of God you become the thing that ought to be hated. The wise man cannot hate. The worldly and frivolous grow every year into insincerity and shadow; the superstitious every year more and more into superstition; and the wise and holy more and more into sons of God. By this law a nation gets its national characteristics, and gradually grows into the incarnation of the thing upon which its heart is set. So he whose hope of glory is Jesus Christ, will grow into a likeness of Christ. He only whose heart is set upon Christ is the Christian. They alone are the children of God.

Now, I do not know how these thoughts strike you, but I do know, if you wisely reflect upon them, you will find them coincident with the word of God. I do know there are many mistakes existing in the general Christian mind relative to the topics to which these thoughts relate. "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." "The kingdom of God is within you." The kingdom of God will come not before, and only, as his will is done on earth even as it is in heaven. These thoughts help us to understand what we are for—namely, to be agencies for doing God's will, and causing it to be done; *i.e.*, our being on earth is to partake of Jesus Christ, to embody what he was. He set us example that we might follow his steps. They help us to understand our relations to the church—what the church is. The true Christian makes the church, and never the church the true Christian. Christianity is not a thing of beliefs, of human organizations—not a thing of selfish experiences and internal contemplations, which are often painfully delusive—things of mere assumption, dependent on what we eat, or upon the constitution inherited from our parents—it is a thing of being. One of its objects was to release us from beliefs and organizations. They are things that are divided unto all people under heaven. God wanted his people to have something more than the heathen had; wanted us to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works, *doing all things that were good and profitable unto men.* The

Christian church is the blessed company of all faithful people; and where there are no faithful people there is no church. Christianity is not simply an agency whose work is to contend with sin. Our general conception of it is, that it is merely one side in a warfare. We do not think so of the sun, though it is true that light is opposed to darkness. The darkness goes because the sun rises. His rising is life, and health, and growth. By the sun our world is full of beauty. Christianity is a moral sun. The Christian is a light. It is the sunlight our world wants. Our work is not a contention with death, but a renewing of life. The sun can do nothing for putrefaction and decay, except make them worse. But it warms the germ, it quickens the plant, it matures the fruit. Each ray does its work where it falls. One ray does not join with others and delegate its powers. The Christian cannot delegate his powers. The supposition that we can, has cast a blight upon our world. It is not organization, it is not money, it is not music, it is not anything outside of us that can redeem this world. We may have splendid churches, we may have splendid preaching, we may have splendid music, but, without righteousness, the worse off we shall be. We think these things ought to attract, but we think wrongly. Let the present condition of human society testify. What we actually sow, that we actually reap. Sow to the flesh, and of the flesh we must reap corruption. Temperance societies may redeem a soul from death, but it is a work of desperation. Free Masonry and Odd Fellowship may create an artificial brotherhood, and mitigate poverty and distress, but they are, to what we really want, what the watering pot is to a shower. Let the showers cease, and the watering pot itself must be empty. The church—the churches—with all their machinery of preaching and charities and “good works,” can do nothing, if you and I are not Christians. You can relieve the poor—not by giving them rich dresses to make for you in which to serve the world, to pander to your pride, to set up distinctions which make the poor feel that they are poor, and make them poorer by setting them to imitating your example—not by

raising cigar factories. There is much talk of the much employment which is found for women in making cigars. Has all our civilization brought us only to the life and death question, "How are we to get bread?" It would so appear. That is what looms up out of the problems which are grinning at us through the din and dust of our chariot wheels. Can we confess that with all the glory we talk so much about, we have so utterly, cruelly, and ignominiously failed? And then, too, can you contemplate the thought of a woman living to make cigars? Such an eternal machinery for a puff of smoke! Do we not, indeed, need another hope of glory? Are we not like the man who had his desire that all he touched might turn to gold—with gold enough—but dying for want of bread? What is to be done? How are we to relieve the poor? Not by creating labour-saving machines which pander to our lusts. Experience proves that the more of all this we have, the more pauperism there is, the more wretched are the masses. Your luxury and mine is starving the children of God. Man doth not live by bread alone. All these things do not touch manhood at all. The more we get, the more we want, and man is still the drudge, bowed to the earth, ground into the dirt. In our notions of a warfare, instead of the thought that we are to be a light and salt ourselves, the Devil makes more recruits than we. True riches is to want little—not to have much. True riches is to know how to work ourselves, not to set others to work. We want to take men and women out of festering cities, and send them out to till the soil, to commune with nature, to get the bread God will give, and to look up and thank him for it. I am weary of the hypocrisy and cant which prate so much about the preciousness of human souls. The real truth is that human souls are held by us the cheapest things in the universe of God. If you see apples on the ground, if you see them in the gutters or kicked along the street, you know apples are cheap. The wretched boys and girls, ragged, dirty, ignorant, without God or guide or school—that is our expression of the value of a human soul. The slums of our cities, the "water

streets" of our towns, they express our estimate of this humanity made in the image of God. Our finery, our palaces, they express our pride and our estimate of ourselves. Not to do for the least of God's children is not to do at all for God. That is not out of my conjectures. It is the standard of the Saviour. It is the measure of our Christianity. It is the gauge of our faith. Having an ideal of glory other than Christ, is to be lost at both ends of this humanity, whether we be within our artificial organisations, or outside of them. Flesh is not fish because you take it out of the water, and the worlding is not a Christian because you baptize him. Living in the conception that Christianity is a warfare, and the church an organization, we leave the enemy till he is a fearful enemy indeed. Little spirits, once pure and sweet and precious, are allowed to grow into desperate vice and crime and wickedness. Wisdom would say, I will take them in their purity and innocence and preciousness, and train them into knowledge and goodness, and make them a power for God—not for hire, nor for policy, but for the love of souls and love of Christ. I think the angels must weep when they look upon the waste of time, of talent, of opportunity in those who call themselves Christians—precious things of God, squandered on bubbles of the earth, and we living in a name. What we want is to be Christians. What the world wants is to have Christians in it. What this humanity needs is not more work to do for the body, but less of it—more time to breathe, to think of God, to work for soul. What you and I want is not more clothes and houses for our bodies, but more raiment and habitation for our souls. What you and I want to be, is not one more body to be worked for, but one more spirit to beat and breathe for somebody else. Till we have renounced the pomps and vanities of the world, and love our neighbour as ourselves, we have not Christ for our hope of glory; and till we have him in sincerity and truth, we have only that hope the destiny of which is to die.

The great trial which has come upon us—which is coming more otently upon us every day, is this moral trial. It is true this



trial comes to every generation; but to some more insidiously than to others—to none more insidiously than to us. We have great wealth, and much power of art and of science. But what is to be its employment? What purpose is it all to subserve? These are solemn questions to us. We are stewards, we are agents. Of us God asks the fruits of the vineyard. Are we to be transformed into statuary like Greece? into houses and clothes like the Romans? into untruth, vice, and degradation, like the heathen? If so, then where is the superiority of our faith? What is the salvation we talk about in Christ? His salvation is that it takes the oppressive yoke away. Is that salvation, which saves us from the best things God has made? Oh! how we have brought reproach upon our Master, and no man layeth it to heart. The heathen say, “Where is now thy God?” In him the prisoner was to leap to burst his chains, and all the sons of want were to be blessed. Shall it ever be? Shall we be turned into men and women? into mind and morals? into knowledge and culture and real soul? into righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost? If into these, then where is the process to begin, and by what agencies to progress? Where or how can we influence its beginning and progress, except as we begin and carry it on in ourselves? You and I have but a short time to live. We shall not be able to come back and rectify our mistakes. Nobody will answer at the dreadful bar for us. Can we afford to be mistaken? So strong is the current of error and mistake and delusion even among us Christians, I almost despair of seeing the general course arrested. We can only each one pause for ourselves. Do you ask me what you are to do? I say, take Christ for your hope of glory, your ideal, your pattern; set your heart upon it. I do not say take his name in mere profession; but study him, what he was, what he said; go and do as he did, live as he lived. It is not an easy thing to do, but the longer we delay the harder it is, and beyond a certain point it is impossible. One saved soul, one that deals honestly with itself, one that rejoices in all truth, shall be for the glory of God, and bring other souls to the Kingdom of Heaven. Into ~~what~~ *this* life to result? Is Christ Jesus our hope of glory?

## EMOTION AND EVIDENCE.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

*"I love them that love me."*—PROVERBS viii. 16.

IT must be only the affectionate seekers of truth that may expect to find the hidden prize. The Wisdom, personified by the poetic Solomon, and represented as sitting at the beautiful gates of the city, an angel of light, cried out to the passing throngs, "I will give my stores of knowledge to those who will give me their friendship." From this scene pictured by the oriental past, from this exchange of truth for love taking place between an angelic form and the unlettered multitude, I would draw the lesson that the mind must reach religion's creed by help of the heart. It is not intimated thus that reason is to be set aside, and that we are all to evolve information out of our feelings, and become independent henceforth of all major and minor premises, and of that whole circuitous path to knowledge; but, with the value of the rational faculty exalted to its highest honour, I would ask you to believe that the affections of the heart must constantly aid the rational faculty, if it is expected to accomplish much in the realm of moral truth. Wisdom will love those who love her. That is, there must be something in the soul that will welcome what words she may speak. There must be an attuning of the two instruments, the objective truth and the subjective man, such that the music of the former may not be rejected as a discord, or lost because inaudible. It has been discovered by scientific men that the

human ear is capable of hearing only those tones which are produced by some definite number of vibrations to the minute, and hence there may be a music in the woods and in the air very near, but in tones beyond the octaves possible with man, and hence that higher fact of music may not love man or reveal itself, simply because man does not love it. Leaving the region of fancy, let us return to the region of fact, and there we do without doubt perceive that Wisdom has always distributed her truths, not to those who hate her, but to those who love. She fills with [her blessings those hands which are willingly and even beggingly raised. Inasmuch now as the domain of religion is the last place in which men will confess this proposition to be true, let us come to this department only after having marked elsewhere the habits of love and doctrine, or the heart and the creed.

You have all just seen a great wisdom in a certain province of study, and a great love in the same province come to a grave, and disappear. Nature told her secrets of birds, trees, fishes, sponges, and sea-weeds, to this illustrious inquirer. Along the Amazon river and amid all the chains of mountains, and on all the sea shores, the angel of wisdom, which Solomon says was with God when he gave the sea its decree, stooped to this mortal whom the world mourns, and whispered story after story of the earth's forms, and changes, and life. Between this subjective mortal and the objective wisdom, friendship was the perpetual days-man, bringing together the world of nature and the world of soul. This naturalist only illustrates the nature of man, and asks us to confess that all the children of earth who have found at last any vast information, all the old artists, and poets, and statesmen, and philosophers, from the most remote Zeno to the most near Guizot or Mill, have found their stores of truth by following the lead of a positive love for the domain of their toil. The many-coloured wisdom they found loved them because they loved it. All the success of Angelo, and Watt, and Morse, and Fulton, came not in antagonism to their hearts, but under its welcome and smile.

Now, with such phenomena before us, we cannot but conclude that those special ideas called "religion" will become truths or doctrines, only by help of the heart's friendship at least. Unless men can reach some wish in their favour, some partiality for them, it is hardly to be supposed that mere logic will ever force them upon individual or public practices. The power of the mind to reject conclusions not welcome to the feelings is enormous. Hence the couplet—

"Convince a man against his will,  
He's of the same opinion still."

Because the feelings create and colour our world for us, and where they do not come to the task, our world goes back to chaos again. The fact that feelings often carry men away from truth, or beyond truth, and thus have originated the expression that "The wish is father of the thought," only shows the almost divine power of the feelings, and that if they can make even a dream seem real, how real must a truth become by the help of their enchantment? If there be some attribute of soul which can make a shadow seem a substance, that is what we all need to guard a substance from becoming a shadow. In an age which is boasting of great logical power, and which is laughing at all those emotional, thoughtless mortals who have a worship, and a faith, and a hope of immortal life, let the experiment be tried of a pure rationalism brought to bear upon a fine art instead of upon a religion, and let the result be marked. Go to the musician and tell him to put aside all emotion, demand that he join some "philosophical society," and there, by a purely mental process, determine whether what he hears is really music, or only a less gross discord; require him to justify his conception of pleasing sound, detain him over the argument whether all sound is not music, or all music is not simply noise, and all the while tell him that nothing is so unmanly as any feeling upon the subject, that to have feelings is to part with philosophy; and at the end of a brief schooling of this kind you may have added to the quantity of rationalism, but you have robbed one home, at

least, of its music. This illustration is not wholly fanciful, for the great Stuart Mill confessed that in his boyhood's love of music there came up constantly the fear that an end would soon be found to the possible variations of the eight notes, and then no more new music would ever be possible. Thus the shadow of an extreme rationalism began to fall upon a world of beauty, checking the impulse of the heart.

You may perceive in the world a practice commended, which, in religion, is by the same world often condemned. Thus we are told that the boy Henry Clay so loved the pleasure and the fame of oratory, that he practised the speaker's art out in the fields, and worked among the rows of corn to the music of oratorical tones and long sentences; and this prepossession of the heart is greatly praised as being the power which carried him from the farm to the senate. Without this prepossession, it is confessed, the country would have no such name in its catalogue of loved ones as that of Henry Clay. But if that early bias of heart was valuable, it must have been so for definite reasons, and permanent reasons, in the form of permanent laws. Those laws must have been these: 1. That prepossession was the stimulus of industry. It made all toil along the given path sweet, and a pleasure more than toil. 2. It also kept the morrow roseate, so that the future of his country, and the possible future of himself, lay before him in such sunlight as to drive away from around his feet the shadow of poverty, and to feed his heart upon the manna of a far off success. The enthusiasm of this youth did not contradict logic, did not so load the young man down with follies and superstitions that it was necessary for a rigid philosophy to go to him in after-life and strip him of his sentimental frippery, and lead him back to a life without dogma and without prejudice. The truth was exactly the opposite. Through the soil of that enthusiasm the actual ideas of oratory had all sprung up. They became visible in the rich atmosphere of love. Loving those that love her, the doctrines of oratory had fully revealed themselves to him who had first given her his heart. Thus the wish is often father of

thought, not only of a false thought, but most commonly of the true one. In order for a truth to rise up in its real beauty before us its dimensions, and repeat to us all its evidence, it is absolutely essential that it stand forth in the world of our sympathy. The indifference of what is called reason will not do. Truth will not hang her pictures in such a cold, feeble manner.

The atmosphere of good will, like that which in Angelo made the truths of his art, or in Clay the truths of his life, must envelop religion also, and help her cardinal ideas to fill the formless void up into the world of life and light.

It is possible that the poverty of evidence, confessed in this world, to exist as to vast moral propositions, comes from the fact that the world was made not for a wicked but for a virtuous race. If the heart would always have been helping state and action, and to treasure up the evidence of God and a future life, the whole moral outlook would have been clear as the existence of the sun in the sky. It is possible that sin, in its form of

indifference, has in all its long history done nothing but destroy evidence by destroying the sentiments that made it ; has taken away a world by taking away the atmosphere that rendered it a part of man's universe, within the reach of the eye or ear. Paul speaks of things which are "spiritually veiled," and hence there must be many things in religion that fade from the sight of reason because they have fallen from the spirit's tenderness—the sight of its love. In the public press recently there was an account of the suicide of a boy of fifteen years. He had been so cruelly beaten by his father in all his eleven years—for infancy had been no protection—that the thought of death became less terrible than the anguish of torments.

The particulars are too horrible to be given. Were you ever tempted to transform that monster into a man, you would never attempt it by logic alone. To read the statutes of the world and the ethics of all casuists, from Confucius to the present day in Penn, would be powerless compared with the privilege, which could secure it, of leading that father back to a childhood home, and there in some kind home lay afresh the founda-

tions to his soul. What he needs is a new soul, all out and out, in which the joyful sports of children would echo like music, and where a tear from one of them, caused by himself, would not burn their cheek so much as his own heart. Out of this new spiritual state the laws of parent and child would rise right up as visible as great vendure-covered mountains. In this atmosphere of love the laws of man to man would not be enlarged by a false mirage; they would be seen in vast outlines, because they are not atoms, but have all the magnificence of worlds. In our penitentiary, a few weeks since, there took place an event which has sickened the community into silence. There are now and then deeds done which discourage tongue and pen, and make the pulpit and press silent, not from indifference, but from sorrow and hopelessness. Now, if you were compelled to begin the education and Christianizing of the person or persons most deeply guilty of that wretched act, would you not ask of God the power to lead those task-masters, not among the world's argument, but among its scenes of love? Lead them to where Christ is proclaiming men to be brothers; to where the hungry are being fed, and the sinful forgiven; to where Wilberforce is freeing slaves, or the American world opening up its liberty and its grand asylum, and then out of this deep study and love of man ask them to see the right of the poor convict to his life, and future hopes of home and liberty. Out of such a tender prepossession of soul, the truth of duty in all its details would flame forth in illumined letters full of justice, because full of humanity. That any man, be he a despot in a prison or in a kingdom, should be able to perceive intellectually the rights of his subjects without himself possessing a humane heart, is as impossible as that an artist should rise to fame by a judgment alone, his heart being perfectly empty of any love of the beautiful.

From these illustrations, taken from the life of mankind at large, I must conclude that belief, the realization of truth in the moral world, is dependent upon the friendship of the heart. The exact sciences proclaim their ideas to all, and ask no favour of any kind. Be you well or ill, happy or sad, young or old, when

the exact science declares that the world is round, and that water is heavier than the air, you have no choice but to accept of the words. Science asks no friendship. But not so in morals. Her truth will love only those who love her. Announcing a God, she expects your heart so to welcome the Infinite Father, that out of your affection will grow up a sacred imagination which will help you to feel the presence and goodness of this blessed One. This must be the reason why there seems present in all nations the traces of a religious instinct. The love of the beautiful is not more universal than the instinct of religion, and therefore we may conclude that as the love of the beautiful is in all places urging mankind forward toward the truths of that world, and everywhere gathers up the evidence and confirms it, so in the world of religion man must set forth with a friendship upon religion's side, and permit it to help him amass the evidence and reach the verdict of God and immortality. The proud intellect may despise this statement of the case, and may say that the true mind will scorn a creed that rests in any degree upon any emotion; but it is not my effort to discover an ideal method of religious conviction, but to inquire what is the existing method of earth. Could we who are here to-day in the dim twilight of faith, and who expect to go to the tomb in the same shadow, be permitted to reshape the evidences of Christianity, doubtless we should make it demonstrative, and have men learn that there is a heaven just as they learn the sum of ten tens, or the height of a hill, or the breadth of a valley. But in the absence of such power, which might at best prove a calamity, all that remains is for us to mark the actual quality of our moral realm, and doing this we cannot but perceive that its evidence, its truth, its general creed, are inseparably joined to a friendship pointing to the God which the evidence seeks. There is many a thinking man now in the late years of his life who, could he return to youthful days again, and carry with him the wisdom gained by a long pilgrimage of doubt and sorrow, would not again attempt to learn of the existence of God and a future life from "Butler's



Analogy" and "Paley's Design" alone, but, abandoning those pages, and going into the deep-shadowed wood, where the voice of cold argument might be turned into music by the diviner sentiment of the soul; or following the footsteps of men and of little children to their sanctuary, would find in their voices and upturned faces a feeling within that shapes and adorns and redoubles the evidences of religion. If God made man upright, then out of that original piety there would have rolled up each day, truth for the day, clear and welcome, clear because welcome. But if man subsequently fell into a sinful state, then with this spiritual separation the evidence would each century become less in quantity and weaker in power, and we should after a time witness a world in which the heart of a sinner would be bound to only the evidence of a saint. Depravity would be seeking conviction from proof that was arranged for a saint. Whether our world is not just such a one I leave to your personal conjecture. Be such its history or not, the lesson seems plain that no simple criticism, no simple logical force, will meet the nature of religion, or the nature of man, or the wants of the soul. Somewhere in the heart's depths, and at some time to you and me, there must spring up such a willingness that religion be true, and such a loving hope and trust as will make a just balance, in which the great moral world can be weighed. To our ill-will it will give no response. To our absolutely unprejudiced soul it will say just what music would say to the indifferent, or what June would say to the insensate Indian; but to the heart seeking wisdom it will come—to the one knocking, the door of this paradise will open wide. We say all these things, while remembering well that thousands have looked upon their feelings as the voice of God, and have defied all logic, and have professed to speak and act wholly by inspiration. There is a sect now in this country whose members do nothing except by an impulse of the Holy Ghost. They despise reason, and prove the existence of God, and even the divinity of Christ, by their consciousness; but this is an abnormal, insane condition of feeling, and counts nothing

the principle of our discourse, that the profoundest toil justly in morals only along the path of good-will. must always toil, and be led forth each day to new tasks. In a world where truth and error are mingled like elements in a chaos, reason is a spirit brooding upon the face of waters. But this reason must, in its work, be the most perfect; must use its evidence in the atmosphere where it was given by nature. It should be the first instinct of reason to be true, and hence, if moral evidence seems to ask for the aid of human sentiment, and cannot endure ill-will and unbelief, let reason then toil upward from a base of love, of wishes, and hope.

It must be the fact that moral proof asks for a spiritual presence that will explain why so many coming to old age or death chambers feel a perfectly new conviction regarding the future world so long in shadow. It is not fear that makes eternity, with its joy or sorrow, seem real, for the adult, educated mind, does coming death bring fear. It is the empire of the heart that sends forth these closing conclusions about the hereafter. The pride, the glory of logic, the scepticism, the vanity of self, are all fading away with the sway of silver hair, or of disease, which plucks from the man his vanity; and in the new atmosphere of love to God, the evidences of religion stand forth, not in an exaggerated form, but life-size, in the first sunlight they ever knew. In the last moments or last years of life, the heart begins to tremble, and to hope that the existence about to be surrendered will be sweetly resumed beyond, and that the dear friends all mature lives have gathered about them in a love which has been tried by long experience, will rejoin it not long hence; that the solemn and closing heartbeat issues not a dream which is delirious, but the just vision of an intellect which has at last escaped its own life-long shadows.

The practical lesson from these thoughts is this: The essence of Christianity must be weighed by a mind not averse to the being and presence of a just God;

by a mind not wholly wedded to exact science, but full of tender sympathy with man, and pity for him if his career of study and love is to terminate at the grave; by a mind capable of looking away from the market-place and from the pleasure of sense, and of beholding the vast human family flashing their angelic wings afar off beyond these humble times and scenes. The evidences of Christianity must be weighed by a soul capable of sadness and of hope. Not simply must the books of theologians be read for, and the books of sceptics against, the doctrines of faith, but the genius of earth, its little children, its joys, its laughter, its cradle, its marriage altar, its deep love crushed often in its budding, its final white hair, its mighty sorrow embracing all at last from its Christ to its humblest child, in its black mantle, must be confessed in its inmost heart; then, when to such a spirit the common arguments of religion are only whispered, the sanctuary of God would seem to be founded in eternity, and men here and angels elsewhere will throng its blessed gates. While the singer of Israel stood out in the sinful street and saw the prosperity of the wicked, his feet had well nigh slipped; but when he went into the sanctuary of God it seems that a new vision came from amid the incense and the song. Not in hours of argument, my friends, but in hours of pensiveness or solitude, the best estimates, the most just, will be made by you all who have reached the noon of life.

“ In some hours of solemn jubilee,  
The massive gates of Paradise are thrown  
Wide open, and forth come, in fragments wild,  
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,  
As odours snatched from beds of amaranth.”

## BURDEN BEARING.

By REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

: "*For every man shall bear his own burden.*"—GALATIANS vi. 5.

IF you look at the second verse of this chapter, you will find these words, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;" while our text asserts that every man shall bear his own burden. These two passages, standing in such juxtaposition and apparently contradictory, were once inexplicable to me. I found in one a command to bear another man's burden, and then, immediately following it, the assertion that every man should bear his own. How I could bear a person's burden if he was compelled to bear it himself, I could not understand. But that experience which years and trials bring to us all has interpreted these two passages correctly to me, and harmonized what formerly was discordant. I see now how it comes about that all of you can aid me in bearing my burden, and yet how, in spite of all your well-meant and needed assistance, I must bear my own burden.

I have not the time to amplify both of these passages, and thereby show you just where they connect—just where the two statements blend into one, and give full expression to one and the same truth. But this, in passing, I will say, that there are some truths which you cannot express in a sentence; you cannot condense them into a passage; you cannot bring their legitimate pressure to bear upon the conscience in a single injunction.

When God, therefore, wishes to express any great truth—which is but another way of saying when he wishes to express himself—he is compelled, as it were, to put it in more than one form of words. Truth is spherical, truth is cone-like, and the mind must encompass it in order to understand it. Thus it is with the Scriptures. In one passage God gives us one view of a truth, further on another, and yet further a third; and so, by presenting it to us from many points of view, calling our attention to this and that side of it, he makes us at last understand it in its full force and completeness.

Moreover, he uses our experience to advance our understanding. One day reveals what the day before was hidden. There are many things in God's government over us which we did not comprehend once, but which we do comprehend now. There are questions in ethics, there are problems of body and mind, which were once mysterious, but which are now plain. From the tangled skein of our ignorance and misgiving each day's experience has unravelled some strand. With some of you the process is nearly completed, and the mass nearly threaded out.

Now, in these two passages, the main topic, the central shaft, is burden bearing. This is the truth which, like a column written all over with hieroglyphs, we are to study. "Bear ye one another's burdens." That is one side of it—that teaches us the duty of sympathy, of tenderness, of mutual helpfulness; but come round to the side of our text, "For every man shall bear his own burden," and you see the other side, and the letters spell a different injunction.

Now, I wish to show you what burdens every man must bear for himself, and why and in what manner he is strengthened to bear them.

This, then, is my first proposition, namely, that every one must bear the burden of his own sins, both as concerns this life and the next.

The results of sin are strictly individual. It is with the soul as with the body, with the spirit as with the flesh. If you

a knife into your arm, it does not affect me. You feel the pain; you yourself must endure the agony. I may sympathize, I may pity, I may bandage the gash, but the flesh and the lacerated fibres are yours, and along your nature telegraphs the pain. So it is with the soul. A man who stabs himself with a bad habit, who opens the arteries of his higher life with the lancet of his passions and drains the vital fluid, who inserts his head within the noose of his appetite and swings himself off from the pedestal of his self, must endure the suffering, the weakness, and the loss which are the issue of his insane conduct.

There is nothing which grips one so tightly, nothing which coils itself around one with so deadly a compression, as this. When this feeling gets the fingers of its agony upon the throat, death itself is a release and a happy deliverance. Do not suppose that any of you can gauge the pressure of this passion. It is the law of our nature that we cannot realise what we have not felt. Pain is its own interpreter. There is no oracle through which agony can express its thoughts: its oracle is itself. To know what remorse is, you must have remorse. The scarred and blasted tree reveals the hot and scorching violence of the lightning, and so the scathed and ruined soul manifests the ruin of sin. I said I did not think that any of you could estimate the terrible character of this sensation, for you have never felt it in its extreme intensity. But many, perhaps all of us, have felt it in part. Each of you, then, that period of your life, the memory of which is most painful; that lapse, that deed, that connivance at evil, that evasion of duty, that hour of evil pressure and of temptation, which most hurt you and others. Bring back and lay it clearly before you that dire experience. Unbar the gates of secrecy, and utter to your own mind and heart that long-expected confession. What humiliation there is in that recognition! What a frightful appearance that lapse has in the light of truth! How it gibbers and shakes its finger at you, as if it had escaped the bondage of its cowardly reticence, and become

a part of the world's free and scornful knowledge! I do not sit in judgment on your conduct. I pronounce no verdict. This is not an arraignment, but an illustration. I only ask you to allow the remembrance of that day, that hour, that deed, to assist your imagination to realize what that remorse must be which follows upon greater lapses and darker crimes. I do not wonder that men redden daggers with their own blood, when, looking through the brazen gateway of such a recollection, I behold the lurid fires and glowing pavement which overhang and illuminate with direful light the path beyond. I wonder most at the endurance of the human will, which, with agony here, and no hope in the hereafter, bears up under the pressure of its self-incurred curse. Where can a man with this remorse in his bosom flee? Can he escape his own heart? Can he triumph over his own thought? Can he sweep away the impending terror of his own forebodings? If he should take the wings of the morning, and fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, what would that avail? If he should mount into heaven, if he should swoop to the nethermost recess of hell, neither the light of the firmament, nor the depth of the bottomless pit itself, could provide him refuge from the terror of his own consciousness. My hearers, a man with this remorse of sin in his heart is the movable centre of a contracting circumference. The fire of his torment girdles him about, and over its blazing border he can never leap. Wherever he moves, it moves with him. The evil which kindled feeds it, and the fire of his suffering will never be quenched. Now, who can deliver him from his punishment? Can you or I? Is there a man or woman here equal to this task? It may be a brother, but can you feel that brother's remorse? It may be a loved one: can you bear the agony of her self-conviction? No. That soul stands alone, like an oak on the plain when the bolt hangs suspended, and about to be launched, above it. The fire will come down, and every leaf shall be withered. The very trunk shall be rived, and upon it shall fall the concentrated violence of the storm. *So upon that soul shall the judgment of Heaven descend, and*

st bear the burden of the Almighty's wrath. The lesson to teach is the individual responsibility of your acts to God. In morals there is no co-partnership, no *pro rata* share of profit and loss. Each man receives according to the nature of his own account. By as much as any of you have done wrong, for that wrong you yourself are responsible. If you have sown to the wind, upon you alone will fall the pressure of the whirlwind. If your virtue is weak, if your will is irresolute, if your appetites are strong, the battle is your own, and you must the battle be fought out. If you have wronged anybody, if you have slighted anybody, if you have betrayed anybody, if you have tempted or ruined anybody—the sin is ghastly and ominous at your own door. Others may have done as ill, others may have done worse, but their evil or ill-doing is no defence for you. Each soul is a unit, and each is absolute. The oak cannot borrow a leaf from the elm, the fruitful cannot lend to a barren tree. The solemnity of this thought is beyond expression. When our souls shall be laid naked before God, the heavens will concentrate upon us their attention. Every heart that is condemned shall be condemned by itself. The sins that we have nursed will give their testimony against us, and wickedness will acquiesce in the execution of its own condemnation. In view of that final arbitration, I ask you all to look within your own hearts, and ascertain definitely what your condition is. Learn what breezes buffet your ship, what pilot holds the helm, and whither you are bound.

1. List imagination in this service. Separate yourself from all the world, make of the world a solitude, depopulate the globe, think of yourself as the only living soul upon which the destinies of heaven and hell is fixed. With all these venerable eyes fastened upon you, bearing the inquisition of the universe, with the scrutiny of the All-seeing Himself stretched like a single beam of light upon your soul, tell me, what is your condition and your hope? Are you prepared for hereafter? If now its massive gates should open, and



the dark-faced usher summon you to appear, could you pass beneath its gloomy portal fearlessly and at peace? Are you ready to go, sin-covered as you are, and take your stand before the great white throne? Would your heart fail and your limbs falter in that hour of supreme emergency? Here and now I say to you, wishing to suggest no fear to supply you with a motive to act, that, if this subject has not been canvassed,—if this great problem, the greatest that ever engaged human thought, the problem which includes all other problems in it as the whole includes the parts,—if this has not been solved, you are living neither in accordance with the injunction of revelation, nor the dictates of common prudence. That man or woman, I care not

what faith, of what profession, of what mode of thought, who does not take the last element of risk out of the future, acts against the promptings of ordinary caution. The man who does not analyze the possibilities of the future down to the last drop, in order to extract therefrom some well-ascertained hope, is a marvel of lethargy and indiscretion. As beings able to think, challenged to thought by as supreme a motive as ever quickened intellect, I exhort you to sink the plummet of your investigation into the depth of this question now. Touch bottom somewhere. Reach some kind of a conclusion; and let this stand as a white day in the calendar of your time, because, between the rising and going down of the sun thereof, you ascertained, for the first time in your life, your moral condition, and fixed by an unalterable decision the character of your future destiny.

I have alluded to the individuality of moral responsibility. I have striven to show you that each one must endure his own sufferings, and abide the result of his own actions, and that in this no one can share with him. Not only is this true in respect to moral responsibility, but it is equally true in respect to moral growth.

You may place two trees side by side, so that their branches shall interlace, and the fragrance of their blossoms intermingle, and yet in their growth each is separate. Covered by the same soil, moistened by the same drop, warmed by the same ray, the

of either collect and reinforce the trunks of each with its respective nourishment. Each tree grows by a law of its own growth, and the law of its own effort. The sap of one in upward or downward flow cannot desert its own channels to feed the fibres of the other. So it is with two Christians. Planted in the same soil, drawing their sustenance from the same source, they, nevertheless, extract it through individual channels of thought and life. In daily contact and communion, whether in floral or fruitful states intermingling, equal in girth, equal in height, equal in the results of their growth, the spiritual-currents of the one mind cannot become the property of the other. They cannot exchange duties. They cannot exchange possessions. They cannot exchange rewards; and, when lifted by the law of transplanting into another soil and clime, the law which has earned, which divided, which individualized them here, will again earn, divide, and individualize them there. No matter how close may be the communion between my soul and other souls; no matter how intimate and sympathetic may be my relation to you and yours; to me, still it remains true that whatever growth I have is my own growth; the hope which cheers me is my own hope; the reward which awaits me, if reward shall be mine, shall be eternally my own reward. It is also true that in the struggle, in peril, in temptation, in battle, assist as you may, exhort as you may, the ultimate act, the final decision, is of my own will.

Against the future, represented by your weakness and in-sin, set your face, then, O Christian! with a grim and intensely personal sentiment of determination. Cover yourself with your own self-sustained and self-advanced shield. When upon by anything hostile, seek the shelter of no one's back, but look steadfastly into the eyes and strike boldly out at the person of your foe. I find nothing in Scripture which warrants me to seek alliance with others in order to escape the necessity of utmost personal endeavour. Seeking only to know that you are covered with the whole armour of God, go into the single-handed and alone. Whatever cup God commends

to your lips, whether bitter or sweet, drink it, looking to no one for encouragement. Draw your inspiration from your own convictions of duty. Live self-collected; live within yourself. Then, when the roar of the battle dies out in your ears, and your spirit stands poised expectant, ready to mount above the tumult for ever, you will be able to say, leaving it to swell the mighty memories of moral triumph, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course."

This does not seem to be the prevailing view of Christians living in the churches to-day. Undue importance, as it appears to me, is attached to the connection of Christians one with another, and to the good or bad effect such connection has upon individual growth. Men seek and depend upon alliance with others, as if in that alliance they could find security from evil, and support other than that which comes through personal watchfulness and effort. They act as if a failure to receive such assistance as they deem proper released them from obligation, or at least furnished a palliation of their own failure. Young or weakly Christians are apt to fall into this error. They are prone to attribute their slow development or non-development to the lethargy of the church, or to their failure to receive such cordial assistance as the covenant suggests and they have reason to expect. I do not say that there is not a certain modicum of truth in this complaint, which, in one way or another, so often comes to the pastor's ears. It is undoubtedly true, that the covenant is not lived up to in this respect. Multitudes who connect themselves with the churches do not receive that fellowship and love which our covenants and the professed object of church organization lead one to anticipate; and it behoves us to give due heed to this complaint, and so act as to make it impossible. But when you have granted the utmost that one can rightfully claim in this respect, when you have acknowledged all that you justly can concerning it, still you will find that the complaint is often based upon a misapprehension of spiritual relations and the causes of spiritual growth. This cannot be too deeply impressed upon a convert's mind, that in his own natural

ers, directed and sanctified by the Spirit, he is to find the use of all his usefulness, his safety, and his growth. Those processes of thought through which the Christian's mind passes toward in understanding of God and apprehension of duty are strictly and absolutely individual. I cannot think for you, or for me. We cannot ponder, we cannot meditate, for one another. Soul food, like body food, is assimilated by each man himself. You might as well insist that I could feed you by what I take into my own system, as that the pabulum which my mental activity secures for my own growth can minister to your enrichment. Material wealth can be transferred, property can be willed to you, and you can be enriched by the result of another's toil; but no one can transfer his thought-power to another. You cannot transmit mental capacity on parchment. I cannot reward idleness with the fruit of consecrated endeavor. In all these respects religion is intensely personal. Whether you rear a hovel or a palace, it must stand on foundations your own hands have hewn and laid, and the mortar which cements the structure must be moistened by the sweat of your own industry. I wish every young Christian, yea, and every old one too, would bring this truth home upon his consciousness, that in this respect he cannot divide responsibility with another. His church may be lethargic, his pastor may be inefficient, he may receive rebuff where he expected sympathy, and worship be only in name, and yet he is held to the same accountability, he must be judged by the same standard of duty and growth. Our graces may be as lifeless as the leaves of a faded tree, and yet he is to be perpetually green. We may be together, or one by one; yet over the ruins of our prostrated ones the turrets of his citadel are to rise.

The great end of all teaching to-day should be to make the membership of our churches individually strong. In the realization of that result lies the hope of the future. The generations to come are to be generations subject to great temptations. Like an orchard of young trees planted on the barren slope of a mountain, our children will grow up in a

morally hazardous exposure. A nation of cities, where masses of men are crowded together—where wealth begets injurious luxury, and poverty leads to crime—where travel is a popular custom and a popular necessity—where nothing is permanent, nothing is settled—is a country where virtue must be strictly individual, if it is to survive at all. We must remember that much which contributed to the assistance of morality in our fathers' day is no longer with us. The home influence, for instance—the most potent and beneficent sentiment—will never again be felt as we have felt it. Cities, railroads, and emigration make home impossible. Your children will not derive their gravity, virtues, and health from such sources as were open to you. Between the young man of 1840 and the present time is a vast gulf of change—let us hope, of progress. The tide ahead runs with whirling swiftmess, and the air is full of drifting spray and patches of froth. Those who sail the future must beat their way up in the teeth of the tempest. Men and women that stand erect under such pressure as awaits the next generation will stand because of some other reason than that they are church members, or because they are restrained by the fear of public opinion. God alone knows what public opinion will be forty years from this. Such as stand will stand because they are strong in themselves. They will stand, as the granite pillar stands, because it is weighty and ponderous, and set upon a well-secured pedestal. I have no faith in a virtue strong only in crutches and props, which topples over the instant friendly outside support is withdrawn. The soul that is virtuous only because of the absence of temptation is not virtuous at all; but the soul that looks enticement steadily in the eye, and frowns it down, until it slinks away abashed—which has the offer, but refuses the bribe—to that soul the struggle and the triumph are divinely strong. His virtue is not an accident. It is the result of that heroic self-control which follows the impartment of the Spirit.

Who of you are thus strong? Whose piety is of that broad-chested sort which has sufficient lung-room for the healthy

inspiration of the whole system? Whose practice in spiritual gymnastics is so well sustained as to keep every joint supple, every tendon flexible, and every artery in healthy beat? Nothing stirs the spirit of admiration and reverence in me more than to see a young man of twenty lower himself down to the weights, clasp the handles, and lift six hundred pounds. How the creative skill and benevolence of God are brought out by such an exhibition of physical power! When you see a little man of one-hundred-and-fifty-pounds' weight elevate a mass of iron and lead, every bone perpendicularly adjusted in its socket, every muscle ridging out, every little vein flushing with rose-tints the clear, transparent skin, you realize the statement of Holy Writ that man is wonderfully and fearfully made.

But, friends, there is a soul-power more wonderful, more divine, than all physical power. There is a nobler sight than a well-tended, well-developed body. It is the spectacle of a well-ended, well-developed spirit. And there is no exhibition so beautiful or so magnetic in its influence under heaven, as that which a soul presents when it lowers itself to the weight of mere adversity, some dead, inert mass of selfishness, and lifts; and, with a pressure on it sufficient to crush a weakly one, and cause it to cry out in pain, stands erect, evenly poised, firmly planted, Godlike. I know some men and women who have lived in the grip of a vice-like pressure for twenty years, and not a sound has escaped their lips, not a look revealed to any the burden they were staggering under. I know men unto whom temptation to cheat and lie, and put a price in money or sensual pleasure upon their virtue, has come up in confidence, and, like a braggart, challenged them to the test; and they have accepted the challenge, and without running behind some other man's back, or the back of the church, or any other protection, have stripped for a fair fight, and locked in with it; and, assisted of God, who never deserted a man yet with such spirit in him, have thrown it and dashed the life out of it. Such Christians never have to fight many battles. Like

Christ himself, they have their hour in the portico of the Temple, and their struggle on the mountain's crest, and, perchance, a night of agony in some Gethsemane; but their life, on the whole, is calm, and confident, and full of surpassing peace.

Now I hold such a self-reliant spirit up as an example for you—especially for you who are young, and you, too, who are weak and tempted. Here is where the heroism of Christian living comes in. Here is where the triumph and the victory appear. That man who cannot control his passions when in full career, who cannot curb his temper and rein in his appetites, who cannot send the cloud back into the heavens and scatter it in golden mist, has never felt the first thrill of kingship.

I wish you all to feel—I wish to feel myself—our personal responsibility in this matter. If any of you have been doing wrong, you must break off, and break off, too, by an act of your own will. Upon you God puts the burden of decision. I may sympathize, I may warn, I may entreat, but I cannot decide for you. O that I could! How quickly, then, would I heave you, by a noble resolution, up to the level of your duty! How quickly would I lift you from the maze of doubt and longing and hesitation, and plant your feet on the firm ground of consecrated endeavour! But, alas! I cannot. I see you beating about in the fog, and I can only stand afar off, on the shore, at the mouth of the harbour, and shout to you the direction: "Ho, men and women! Ho, brothers! this way, this way! Steer for the light that streams from the Cross!" Ah, me! ah, me! the winds and waves beat back my voice, and you, all heedless of peril, are being buffeted and driven hither and thither while the precious moments are passing.

See what determination the world manifests in pursuit of carnal things; over what sharp obstacles men mount to honour and wealth. A worldly man asks no help from another. He plays the game of life boldly, asking no odds. When he comes to an obstruction he puts his shoulder bravely against it, and

He lifts it aside or climbs over it. Nay, more, out of the very fragments of previous overthrow he erects a triumph. Nothing draws him nor discourages him. He asks no one to bear his burden. He bears it himself, and finds it to be a source of strength and power. And shall a Christian shrink from what a worldling bravely attempts? Shall we unto whom the heavens minister faint, when those to whom the gates of power are shut severe? My brethren, these things ought not so to be. What is a slip? What is a scar? What is a fall? They will testify to the perils you endured and the heroism of your severance, at the Last Day. Think not of these. Write on your banner, where, living or dying, your eyes shall behold them, these words: "He who endureth unto the end shall be saved."

But, friends, who made it possible for us to bear our burdens? Who taught us by the wisdom of his lips? Who, the example of his life and death? It was Jesus. He bore the burden when he cried in the garden, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." No, neither the sympathy of heaven nor the power of God delivered him. He accepted the destiny of his condition; he set his lips to the bitter cup, and drained to the very dregs. But how came he, the Innocent One, the Holy One, to have any burden? Had he committed sin that he might groan under the judgment? No; his nature was as white as lily when it floats on a darkened tide. The law of God made no claim against him. He had not transgressed, he had not violated, the least injunction of the Almighty. He had injured no one, he had slighted no one, he had neglected no

How came he, then, to have a burden? and whose burden was it that he bore? It was your burden and mine that bore. Heaven had claims against us, and he out of love and compassion undertook to satisfy those claims. He did satisfy them. It was decreed that he must leave heaven for a time, and he left it. It was decreed that he must take the lot and portion of a mortal, and he took them. It was decreed that he must die, and the blood of his most precious life was freely



shed on Calvary. All this was done for us. I mean every one of you—for you who accept and for you who reject him. He was the only man who ever died for his enemies. And now, with all that Christ did for you to point and wing it, I launch this query straight home to your hearts, What have you done for him? Have you loved him? Have you served him? Have you ever gone and done so much as to express a word of gratitude to him? Do you feel any gratitude? Why, a dog is thankful for the bread you give him, and, faithful unto death to his benefactor, he will lie down in the mountains by your side and die. And yet there are some of you unto whom that dog might well be taken as a teacher and an example. The wind will soon come up from the south balmy and warm, bearing in its breath suggestions of the orange and the rose, and every root and fibre will thrill in welcome, and the dry twigs swell and prepare to unfurl their green banners, and the buds, unable to restrain themselves longer, will burst into beauty and fragrance. Shall Nature thus hasten to express her gratitude to God as the sun comes journeying up from the tropics, and shall we, over whom that love is ever at its meridian, raying down its invitation upon us, quickening us with sweet enticements of growth, remain silent, unmoved, and thankless? May we be quickened in our graces, and all the dead things in us start into new life, and our hearts, warmed into energy, know a great blossoming of hope and holy impulse—forerunners of great spiritual fruitage!

But, before I close, a word of cheer, a word of hope and consolation!

It is true I know little of your lives, little of your trials, little of the burdens under which with varying strength you have walked thus far. But life has a stern discipline for all. What struggle, I say to myself, what effort, what manifold phases of experience, what sighs and groans and agonies are unexpressed! What lines of recollection run backward to other days and scenes! What memories, starting from the past, throng in upon us, and hover like a vast cloud of invisible

witnesses over us, until every man beholds the record of his life, written as at the judgment, in living light above his head. And I think of that future which awaits us, of the days yet to be ours, moving in silent and measured procession out of eternity, and of that day of days, which shall be the last, and lose the calendar of our toil for ever. Live so as to think of that day with joy. It is not for me to speculate as to what death will bring us. I imagine that it will bring us far more than most of us think. At least this much we know, it will bring to the weary and the heavy-laden rest, and to such as missed the fulfilment here a renewal of all their hopes. You will meet with those who journeyed on, being called first, before you—the brave, the gentle, and the good; and all that is sweet in hope or dear in expectation, if it be pure and cherished purely, will come and put its arms around you, and I will have it with you as yours eternally. And unto all is and much beside, yea, unto this vast temple of life and love, with its magnificent entablatures and majestic spaces, all who enter will enter through one door, Christ Jesus, our Lord and our Redeemer. For unto the city, in which it is abided, with its many gates, each gate a solid pearl, none can enter by any other way. For he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

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## THE SYMPATHY OF OUR LORD.

BY REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*"Seeing, then, that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."*—HEBREWS iv. 14, 16.

IN this epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle Paul proclaims Christ to the Jews through the medium of their own Mosaic economy. He holds up the Messiah, and then says, here is what all the ages under the old covenant have been promising and producing. If certainly you are truly Jews, so much the more certainly ought you to be truly Christians. That the Jews did not see the responsiveness, the deep fulfilment in Christ of all that was in Moses, is very surprising, for truly wonderful was that whole system, in that it should be capable of such a counterpart—so wonderful, nothing but God's power could have suggested it antecedently, nothing but God's power could have fulfilled it subsequently. It was not in human power to frame a system capable of a counterpart in one man; or, if it were, it was not in human power to produce the one man who should be that counterpart. If they believed the Mosaic dispensation came from God, more religiously ought they to believe Christ came from God, for in all respects he fulfilled *the Scriptures*.

One very prominent feature in that Mosaic system was the High Priest. There was but one at a time. It was his office and service which qualified Israel for divine worship, for admission to the privileges of the covenant. He made the great atonement, entering once a year, and he alone, to the Holy of Holies, to intercede for his people. Through him and his intercession the people had access to the great God—were reconciled to their offended Maker. Yet he was no priest. He could offer no sacrifice. He could make no atonement. The blood of bulls and goats could avail nothing. He was but a man. His Holy of Holies was but another spot of this one common earth. There never was but one priest—never can be but one. There never was but one sacrifice and atonement. All the high priests that ever were, all put together, were only one long shadow, one continued type. All the sacrifices and atonements were not sacrifices and atonements, but all together only pledges of a sacrifice and atonement—the one eternal sacrifice and atonement. Jesus Christ was High Priest and sacrifice and atonement—was then, as now, the one Mediator between God and man. In the fulness of time the one High Priest offered himself a ransom for many. As compared with all God's children, Israel was but the small dust of the balance. They for whom Christ offered atonement were the human race. Once for all and for ever, "through him we have access unto the Father." "We have boldness and access with confidence." "We have a great High Priest which is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God."

When Paul wrote that, it had not been long since Jesus had gone up. When you open these Scriptures and read the record of the early church, read these epistles of the Apostles, you have a proof of all they assert in their manner of asserting it. To them the life and words of Christ, the crucifixion, the resurrection and ascension, were not things that might possibly have been; they were things that really were. The early believers lived in the presence of them. All was as vivid before them as to us is the yesterday's death-bed scene of our dearest friend.

The person, the last words—we hear them and see them still. It does not seem possible to forget them. Their thoughts were not wholly up in heaven, but he was still here amid scenes his presence had consecrated and hallowed. When their thoughts were in heaven they were with him, as he had been. He who had gone into heaven was he who had walked the earth, had hungered and thirsted, had contended with human contradictions, had carried human burdens, had fed the hungry and cured the sick, and comforted the weary and ignorant. He was the Son of God, but he was Jesus. He was the man Christ Jesus, accessible to the humblest, to whom, even in the crowd, the obscurest and neediest could come and touch him and be healed, or, at a feast, whose feet even a Magdalene could bathe in penitent tears. He who had gone was he who had come, but it was not so much that as it was he who had been here—his strong manhood sympathising with this weak manhood—a sinless humanity helping us to become sinless. He was a compassionate High Priest. He had been tried in all respects as we are—he, without sin, wearing all the consequences of sin, that he might rescue us sinners.

It is this idea that penetrates the Apostle, the idea of the love of God for us, of his perfect sympathy with us. Man doth not yet fully understand it. The tendency of all human thought in contemplating God has been to remove him, in place and Spirit, infinitely from man. Fallen human nature has invested the Deity with a being out of its own being, clothed God in an impossibility, and that impossibility born of gloom and darkness. It is the nature of ignorance and weakness so to invest all being, to call upon its fears, to complicate, till when the truth dawns its simplicity is as astonishing as the truth itself. Human theories of the creation of the world, of its form and structure after it was created—theories to explain natural phenomena before science, true science, arose—all possess a marvellousness which is unnatural, except as it was natural for human ignorance to produce it. No two parts of man's marvellous schemes coincided. An eclipse of sun or moon would

produce a paroxysm of fear. A pestilence, in which God pitied them more than they pitied each other, would overwhelm them with the dread of God's anger. That sublime order in the universe which produced an eclipse should have begotten only emotions of admiration. That energy, stimulated by a pestilence to acts of great superstition, would have better pleased God in acts of wisdom for preventing the causes which produced the pestilence. Ignorance and fear were twin sisters. Like two blind fortune-tellers, they not only robbed man of the little good he had, but drove him further away from the one good he wanted. Death is in all ignorance, but worst death of all in ignorance of God. It makes him—the very thing we want the most—the thing we least desire; and the thing we do desire, the very thing we ought not to have.

With profoundest truth did Jesus Christ say in that prayer for all humanity—"This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And there are two senses in which a thing may be said to be known. We know a thing when we know all there is about it—its nature, its power, its office; but nothing outside of man's device by man can be so known, for in an infinite universe every integral part has infinite relations. But a thing may be said to be known when what we know of it is a real knowledge, or the knowledge of it, so far as it goes, is of the reality. In this sense the new world was known when Columbus discovered it; otherwise it is not yet known. We know more of it than Columbus did, and are going on to know it. But there are things in it, and destinies wrapt up in it for man, which he can know only as experiences unfold. The circulation of the blood was known when Harvey discovered it, but we do not yet know all there is about the circulation of the blood. Many blessings sprung into being for man with that discovery, but many more blessings are in store for us yet, as facts respecting it which are still latent shall be revealed.

We can never know all there is of God. The archangels above know not all. An eternity of eternities from now, there

will be something still for them to learn. But what joy transcendent, what glory, what exaltation to know him as they know him. And what life, what blessedness, to know him at all. To find him is to find life; it is to be brought out of darkness into light—out of the power of Satan unto the true God. To find him is to find that for which there is a supreme craving in these natures—that which was made to be filled with him—that for which he exists. To find him is to find love—the moving spirit of the universe—that which alone can explain all being, its brightness or its darkness—moral greatness shining in its majesty, or moral eclipse producing awe in its mysterious gloom.

God is love. The element of love implies precisely this sympathy. Love is not simply benevolence, or well-wishing—not simply a general good nature. Love is attachment, yearning toward an object. That object must be capable of responsiveness, of corresponding sympathy. When there is such correspondence, such perfect sympathy, there is peace, joy passing understanding, joy felt. Doors to the heart are opened. Avenues to bliss are discovered. Both sides are blessed. Where there is not a responsiveness—where the object cannot respond, there is not love. There may be attachment, but that attachment fills not the soul. Man cannot love a flower, or a star, or an idea. He may like a flower, or a star, or an idea. When we apply the word love to such attachment we misapply it. The nature of God implies this highest—this perfect love for his creatures, whom he has made capable of response. Nay, his whole being could not be exercised without such love. His moral creatures are the only fitting objects of such love. While he likes all being because it is very good, he loves only his moral beings. They are the proper objects of his love. He is the proper, natural object of their love. They are made to love, to trust, to depend. His love for us is a protecting, defending, strengthening love. Our love for him should be a depending, hoping, consulting love, glorying in his glory—longing for perfect assimilation and union. Only in *relying upon a proper object* does our being find relief, develop-

Only in relying upon God is our moral nature safe. It is eternal to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. Perfect sympathy with man—this unbounded love for us—the burden of the Gospel, the message of Christ, God always has loved, always will love. He hates nothing he has made, never can hate at all, for hatred is weakness, or that reason, never can be in the Deity. Not so, however, with grief and pity. Grief and pity are in their very nature divine. The richer the nature the more deeply sympathetic—more truly and closely responsive, as I have said, is each parcel of the very idea of God. The holier the nature the more it can endure, the more it can sacrifice, and in all patience and sacrifice discover the richness of its being, and find joyment in its work. It seems contradictory, but nevertheless it is fact, and so true is it we cannot even conceive a noble nature destitute of such an element. So true is it we cannot conceive of a God, a true God, in whom it is wanting. Lucifer fell, the emotions in the divine breast were not affected by anger. His fall in one sense affected not Jehovah, there was no war, as Milton suggests. The lamb that leaves the fold goes into the thickets. All the war there is, is not with man, but with the elements. Wherein you are in error, in pride, or ignorance, you may grieve the Holy Ghost, but not because you are destroying yourself. How far Satan had fallen in moral being we do not know; but it could not have fallen any farther, for then he had not fallen. When he fell the All-Father did not hate him, hurled no thunderbolt after him, sought his return as a shepherd seeks his stray lamb—regarded him as a living father pitieth his erring child. What were devised for his rescue we do not know; but that we should not seek him is not to be believed.

When Adam fell, there was the great Father pitying him. He hurled no thunderbolt after him. The misfortunes that came upon him, the curses that came upon him, were the scratches on his horns to which he had gone. He knew not the road to ruin. - Darkness struck terror into him and turned the



divine laws, of which till then he was ignorant, into flaming cherubim, keeping him in the darkness he had sought. There they are to this day, to all who are in that darkness. But God commenced to seek, commenced to bring back that which was lost. He commenced out of his pitying love, out of this very nature we have been considering. He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to seek and save that which was lost. He looked upon sin in sorrow, as an unspeakable misfortune, as a mother would look upon her boy if she should find him in the gutter, stript and wounded, and drugged and dying. Disobedience, and ingratitude, and dissipation, might have brought him there, but she would be willing to die to bring him back. She could go there into that gutter. She could bear his insults and assaults, and while he smote her, pillow his head upon her bosom, if only she could reclaim him. Be the sons at home many or few, be they never so wise and never so dutiful, she could leave them and seek this one, because he of them all needed her love—because his misfortune was great, his humiliation deep. She could rest not till he were made whole as the rest, or till his doom were become irrevocable.

It is the office of love so to seek, so to act. The incarnation of Christ grew out of the love of God. So far from imagining that God could not come to a wicked world, we have the cause of his coming in the very fact that it was wicked. So far from imagining that God could not suffer, we could have no true conception of God, of true divine glorified Godhead, if he had not suffered. While we were sinners, and because we were sinners, Christ died for us, and he died for us because he was God. It is not the sin that grieves him, the particular act or condition. It is the ingratitude, the rejection of his love, the insensibility to his sympathy, the absence of peace, and knowledge, and wisdom in your heart, the unrest and woe that fill your being, the isolation and desolation that are there. There are music and dancing and joy in your Father's home, and he wants you there, not for his sake, but for your sake, because you are his child, and he wants you to be peaceful and happy

And all of us in his sight are alike. All we, like sheep, have gone astray. Even the best of us, if there is any best, are in some error and some sin, and much suffering. Not one of us can go to heaven because we are fit to go there. Every one of us, if we go at all, shall have to leave our tattered righteousness outside, and put on the sandals and robes which our Father shall give us. We cut ourselves up into saints and sinners, but oh! I think God does not cut us up so at all. All of us are sinners, and yet all his children; and he loves us out of the fountains of his perfect love. We cut ourselves up into church and world, but oh! whether church or world, God in the nature of things finds most delight in those who most love him.

Now I think we cannot know God at all until we know that he is this love. And though it is not yet to know all there is of God, it is truly, so far as it goes, to know him, and not something our fears have created for him. This is what Jesus revealed him to be. This revelation of Jesus, this action of Jesus, proves that Christ was God. He was to every man the very thing that was wanted—to every man except the Scribe and Pharisee, who was a god to himself, and wanted not a real God. He was eyes to the blind and ears to the deaf, and feet to the lame, and rest to the weary, and life to the friendless and hopeless. And so he is still. He who descended to this earth and brought God to us, is he who ascended to heaven, and carried humanity before God. He is the same there now that he was here then. He is God, but he is man too. I think the church, unlike Paul and the Apostles, ceased to realize that as they should. They elevated Christ's divinity, not to its real throne, but away from it, into conjecture, into mystery, born of human ignorance. And the poor human heart wanted the God-man to feel for it—the God-man in whose sheltering and soothing arms it could nestle. Because of this mistake in the church itself, some men were led to cling to the man, Christ Jesus, and give up the Son of God: not so much wrong in what they held, as unfortunate and suffering loss in what they let go. And then, in the pro-

gress of time, to supply this very sympathy which only is in Christ, and in him because he is God, the church, so-called, created a being to supply it—placed the virgin mother upon the mediatorial throne, and sits there to-day in mortal imagination only because man does not know how all they conceive to be in her is only in her sinless and perfect son. It is this error of practically ignoring Christ's perfect manhood which has led to these other two errors—of a denial of his deity on the one hand, and of a creation to supply its office on the other—and it is this, too, which keeps them alive. We want to know that Christ is man as well as God—that the man Christ Jesus is in heaven, sympathetic, compassionate. We have a High Priest passed into the heavens, touched with a feeling of our infirmity. We do not want any other there. There is not a want nor a woe we have which he does not know. You may be under the power of Satan, feeling that there is no God, or that God does not care anything about you ; he knows what that is, and from the cross he says to you, if you could only hear him : “ There is a God, and he is your father, and he loves you, and will be glad to have you draw nigh to him.” No matter what your sin is, how long or how far away you may have gone, “ Come back with me ; my cross pledges you forgiveness and a welcome ; all I desire is to have you home.” You may be burdened with temptations, and heavy crosses, and sorrows ; you may even have brought them upon yourselves ; but even if you are so burdened, and even if you have bound that burden upon your shoulders, he is still with you, and says, “ Cast thy burden upon me ; I only want to get you home.” He is compassionate. You may have some sorrow that lies close and heavy upon your spirit, some child that is out of the way, some thorn that pierces through to the very heart, some anxiety and care ; but if you have, he says, “ Look up, and set your heart upon me and trust me, and come home and rest. You may be weary and fainting, and feel as the master himself under the heavy cross he could not carry to Calvary, but if you do, he says, “ Be not afraid, I am with you. Though your feet be sinking and darkness be round about, my arm is

stretched. Yonder is thy heritage and thy resting place." , brethren! there are times in this life when we need sympathy that is real and earnest and near. Human sympathy is worth something—true sympathy worth much. It smoothes our road—it casts a light across our path—it keeps down our fears. But there are times even before we reach the last stage of this dark valley, when we need a help that is more than human—and a help that we know will not fail us, will not forsake us. That help is in God, is in Christ, because he is touched with feeling of our infirmities. He was tried in all points as we

Human sympathy goes not far. Men lay their burdens on others. They aggravate and magnify the burdens we have of our own. But in our troubles he is not like man. He does not come to tell us to do just the very thing we are unable to do; does not go with us till he finds the real fault, then reproach us with it and leave us because we are at fault. He does not upbraid us and so turn the fault into a double misfortune. He is close with us to comfort and strengthen us, if we can only look up and see him. If he does not take us out of our sorrow, or drive sorrow away from us, it is because our road to the Kingdom lies along and through that experience. There is no other road to it. With Christ there with us, we shall have light and help, and come safely to the promised rest. And once arrived there, we get a consolation to know that God himself is judge. You see how perfect love casts out all fear. Such a God—one that knows our weakness, all the temptation, all the fault—one that has suffered passion, our Father.

This is life eternal, to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Brethren, begin to understand how he loves you, and you will begin to know him. Understand how he loves you, and you will then love him. As you love him you will cease to love the world—that which is unworthy your affections. You will cease to grieve him. You will see it is not your sin over which he grieves, but your ingratitude and your insensibility—your unlikeness to him, which makes him love that which he does not love. As you love him,

conceive him not at an infinite remove from you, but present here with you, the same compassionate high priest, the meek and lowly Jesus, the accessible Saviour. Whether it seem so or not, as he was with us, so is God with us. That incarnation is God with us. The ascension is not a suspension of his presence with us, but the finishing touch to a perfect demonstration that God is never absent from us.

“Seeing, then, that we have a great high priest that is passed into the heavens—Jesus, the Son of God—let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but one that was in all respects tempted like as we are, and yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace and help in time of need.”

## NEARNESS OF GOD.

BY REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

*"Thou art near, O Lord."*—PSALM cxix. 151.

THE basis of this declaration is the greatness and goodness of God. It is an ejaculation founded on the conviction that in God exist such powers of observation and such faculties that nothing escapes his notice, nothing is beyond his control.

Nature accepts this declaration of faith. She willingly testifies to the presence of a First Cause. In her every form and order of life you find the suggestion of Creative Power. Matter is dead, inert. In it of itself is no faculty of action. It must be acted upon, it must be vitalized, before the spirit of combination, the impulse of life, enters into it. To this formula, this need, every living substance assents.

The human mind receives the same idea readily. The imagination uses this conception in many lovely and reverential ways. The very senses of the body rejoice at the thought, and are spiritualized by it. In the operation of laws all around us, which could not of themselves have sprung into existence, and the ceaseless energy of which must have been derived from some outside propulsion, the mind recognizes the omnipresence of the Creator. Inanimate substances in their dumb processes of growth and change confess to the same sentiment. The tree says, God is near me, for I am by nature senseless and powerless. I am but so much dead matter operated upon by forces uncaused

by and unknown to me. In my substance, in root, trunk, or bough, is no power to occasion such a change as is coming over me. See, it says—and every leaf and twig speaks—see the transformation going on among my branches! Behold the addition every hour makes to my appearance! And thus the tree rejoices in God's nearness, and all nature re-echoes the same devout sentiment.

It is of this Divine nearness to man I would speak. It is not my purpose to construct an argument or make a laboured analysis. It is not logical demonstration so much as suggestion that I have in view. A sermon is not a boat which an audience can get into and sail off securely on a pleasant intellectual voyage of an hour. It is food to satisfy soul-hunger, to strengthen present weakness, to revive faintness, to soothe pain as it is now felt, and illuminate gathering darkness—at least, I would that this should prove so.

My hope is to make some of you realize more fully than you do now that God is near you, and near you in love, and will be all the days of your coming life.

I would suggest, in the first place, that God is near us in the hour of human desertion.

The Psalms of David are wonderful in the manifold expression they give to human feeling on the one hand, and the Divine nature on the other. Some of them are to God what lakes are to the surrounding and overhanging mountains—a mirror in which we behold him reflected. There is one passage found in the twenty-seventh Psalm, by which I have been more comforted, and in which I have seen a more lovely reflection of God, than in any one passage of the whole Bible. I refer to the verse where the writer is speaking of his faith in God's love. He says: "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." What a picture of God that is! When my mother forsakes me! How the mind pauses and shrinks at the suggestion! My mother forsake me, I say to myself, mother forsake me! Never! What! that mother who gave me birth, rejoicing in the pain which ushered me to life,

of her life to strengthen mine, and woke my infant thought, who bore with all my wild, now often-repented, offence, who toiled and watched for me—that mother who sat off with her Bible on her knees, perhaps, her wrinkled and aged hands resting on it, her head streaked with silvery hair, her lips moving both in thanksgiving and prayer for me—mother forsake me! Never! But, my friends, if it is possible; if the sweet current of her endless love could break upon itself, and leave me panting upon the sand; if that sin, some heavy and swift-smiting crime, smote me and left me bruised and bleeding; and father should come, cursing me, curse one who had dishonoured his name, and I; and mother, pausing only a moment to wring her aged groan, pass on too; then the Lord, yea, God who sits in the heavens, who hates sin, but loves the sinner infinitely—coming after father and mother, would stoop and take me. Is not this the God that some of you will not love, some will not serve; yea, this is the God of the orthodox, whom some of you say we make a hard, unfeeling rejoicing in the punishment of men.

Loneliness and desertion of spirit—who at one time or another has not passed through such seasons? who has not shivered in a cold cloud, and come dripping and chilled out of the waters of despair? Even Christ was deserted, and bore the agony of the cross and trial unassisted by friends. Loneliness is often the lot of our own states and moods, or circumstances. The soul seeks its own solitude, its own despair, and repels human aid. Who admits the world to the secrecy of his thoughts? Who admits the crowd to rush against and force the fastenings of the soul's reticence, and hear its whispered doubts and fears, its sorrows and its self-accusations? No one. The fool babbles, the mouth of the capable is shut. Half our lives the world knows nothing of, and would not understand if they did know.

When then one like unto ourselves is admitted into the circle of our inner life, and carries about with him the knowledge of our existence; but it lies down and sleeps in the grave when



he sleeps. Our very position, by the force of nature or circumstance, is often repellent, and the scorn or sympathy of the world is turned back, as the rain which beats, or the warm air which floats up against the sides of the house, is turned back therefrom when the windows are closed. We have protection from the rain, it is true, but we lose the fragrance of the perfume.

But there are times when this isolation is made more complete because of surrounding circumstances. A great sorrow, the source of which we may not tell, a disappointment which we must conceal, a lapse which we must cover up, a knowledge we must hide, or an appetite which we must combat, but whose presence we must not declare—each or all of these can produce the same result. Many of you, perhaps, understand the philosophy of this statement. You recognize the accuracy of the analysis. You have stood the centre of some black circle, and felt the agony of the all-surrounding pressure, and you know how powerless the world is to help you at such moments; how all the wires along which the currents of sympathy ordinarily flow are cut or made useless by the raging of the storm, so that human affection can send no message of love, no word of guidance or cheer—the mother is powerless to help the child, the wife the husband, or the husband the wife. At the two extremes, at the height and depth of human feeling, the soul stands alone. When lifted upon the crest of some great emotion, or when sunk in the depth of despair, its isolation is complete, it is too far above or below the ordinary level of life to hear or heed its voice.

It seems to be God's will that at the supreme moments of our lives we should be alone with him. Moses must die unattended, and the Christ must bear the agony of the garden when his disciples were heavy with sleep. The great decisions of our lives are made when alone, and their great griefs are borne with our heads buried in the pillow. More than once are we exiled from the world. More than once have we less than an island for our home, and a loneliness more deep, more oppressive, than

ness of human faces, and the limitless reach of water, is down. But, friends, we are never in reality alone, reality deserted. On our right hand and on our left visible walks. When we stand on the summit of our joy, the Ineffable is with us; and when we lie in the dark darkness of our despair, the Divine Radiance is there. Frightened this thought is a terror, but to the good and those who would be good it is a joy and consolation. The fool hath no heart, "There is no God!" and he repeats it, hoping in vain to believe the lie; but he never believes it, and he knows it is a lie. Like a snake in torture, he kills himself by the use of his own fangs. But the good and those who are good say, each with a gladness no voice can ever utter, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want." The true Christian, confirmed in its faith, and strengthened by the power of God, breaks into song in dying, and, like a swan, whose dying note is the sweetest, exclaims, "Thy rod and thy staff comfort me!" Oh, the joy of his nearness! Oh, the joy of his presence, in the light of which darkness melts, and gloom which men so dread brightens into radiance as it goes away!

Mark, in the second place, that God is near to us in the hour of temptation.

The co-existence and operation of a divine influence is no more taught in the Scripture than is the presence of an evil influence. The angelic and demoniacal influence appear side by side through the whole course of Scripture narrative, as two clouds that meet in the heavens—the one charged with positive, the other with negative electricity, and darting into each other's path as they move along, their fiery opposition. From Eden to the end—*from Genesis to Revelation*—the same antagonism of good and evil forces is seen; and to-day we are subject to the same opposing forces. Experience demonstrates this. How often we are made conscious of this pressure from either side! How often we have felt that influences opposite in tendency and power were bringing each its distinct action to bear upon us,

and our wills and feelings were swayed as ships anchored where two converging currents meet! For days, perhaps for weeks, we have thus stood, our decision held at equal poise by opposite motives, or oscillating up and down as the higher or lower preponderated.

No one who has ever debated a question of duty, seeking how to avoid it—no one who has ever had a temptation of any sort, can doubt that in the moral world are two opposite forces, ever at work, and at work, too, on him. Even Jesus was not exempt from this. The established order of things was not modified even to accommodate him. He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.

Now no one can order the time and character of his temptations. An oak might as well try to order the force and direction of the gale that shall next bear down on it, as for any one of you to attempt to say what shall be the nature and strength of that temptation which to-morrow shall entice us. That is one of the chief sources of our weakness. Now and then, it is true, a great cloud rolls up from a fixed point, and we know which way to scud and what sails to take in. But not unfrequently the blackness is spread over the entire heavens, and not a flash or single jar warns us from what quarter the danger is to come. And there is not a person now who can tell whether he will be tempted on this or that side of his nature to-morrow, or whether the pressure will be too strong for him or not.

Now there is, as I judge, a very prevalent feeling that, when a man is being tempted, he is deserted of God. I need not discuss the origin of this view. I will remark only concerning the effect of it on the tempted person himself, and what I regard as the true view.

Now the very feeling that the Tempter wishes to produce in the person's mind at the time of his being tempted is that he is deserted of God. In that thought lies half the force of the temptation. The fallen or falling man is made to feel that the heavens are black toward him, that God hates him on account of his sins, that he has fallen too far ever to recover, and is given over as lost. Well does Satan know that from this thought will spring

of wild recklessness, a desperation of mind, a sort of madness to sin in its license, which will confirm and harden him in his wicked course and practice.

My friends, that is not my theology. I have no idea that the presence of God is around me save when I totter, but that the moment I begin to reel he withdraws it, and leaves me to stand as it may chance. Heaven is no idle spectator of human weakness, and at every crisis of my life invisible hands have been around my loins and strengthened the braces of my shield. When I go forth to battle, a true leader goes forth with it; never did a man go out to do battle for truth and right who was not followed, as he advanced, the chariot of the Almighty rolling behind him. In the supreme moment of his destiny, whether of downfall or triumph, God always stands by a follower. Satan draws nigh a soul in enmity, God draws nigh in its defence.

When evil triumphs, beats down your guard, strikes you to the ground, and stands fiendishly victorious, a shield is suddenly thrust between the soul and his uplifted arm, the foe retires baffled and chagrined. How many such scenes some of us can recall! How many such escapes we have known!

Do not mean to say that a man may not so abuse and out-vine forbearance as to be irrevocably hardened and given up to God. Sin may, undoubtedly, so far produce its logical result even in this life, as to take the very productive powers out of the soul. As it is with a barren and sandy plain on which the wind has scooped the nourishing soil, so that not a tuft of grass relieves the fierce glitter of the noonday sun, so it is possible that here and there a man may be living with no truth, or the germ of a virtue, in his soul. But such a man, if such there is, is not a man; he is a monster. He perishes, not by sin, but the result of sin, yea, of sin long indulged and cherished.

My friends, such do not form the rule; they are the exception. Men are not monsters, earth is not hell, and the manifestation of the logical and ultimate result of sin upon

character is not beheld here. The human soul is like an instrument of music jangled and out of tune. It needs the master's touch. The strings are not torn from the frame. The keys are not displaced. They are not loosened. The discord comes from their temporary condition. A fall, a jar, a wrench, has wrought confusion. Set them in order, bring them up to the line of the correct note; then sweep them, and what melody, what power, what liquid sweetness of sound shall come out of them!

Now you let a man fall into this condition, and what does God do? desert him, leave him, let him alone, give him up? Why *no*, that is not Heaven's way. Why, think what man has cost God, what he has done for him already. The best gauge of man's value is the effort God has put forth in his behalf. Put Calvary, put all the prophets from Moses down, put all the efforts of the Holy Ghost, in one scale, and man in the other; and the balance gives the Divine estimate of the human soul, yea of your soul and mine. Who here thought God loved him that much? What one dreamed that his determination to save him amounted to that?

Now when God sees a man or woman struggling with temptation, sees you about to fall, sees the wreck and ruin which will result unless he comes to your rescue, do you think he stands aloof, indifferent and regardless how it shall go with you? Do you think Christ could have allowed Peter to sink? Why, the very buoyancy would have gone out of Christ himself, if he had coolly withheld himself from his disciple's rescue. There is not an element of the Divine nature, there is not one amid the multitude of his mercies, which does not mean help, and support, and salvation to you and me, in the hour of our deepest need. There is a lily—he is thoughtful of that. Yet, what is a lily? Pluck it; fling its leaves into the air; stand and idly watch them as the white fragments of its parted beauty drift down the wind. What has the world lost? The air is not less sweet, the earth is not less fair. There is a bird,—a little bunch of tuneful down. Even in mid-flight, in mid-song, it rolls upon its back, and falls fluttering to the earth. A drop of blood

breast, two ruffled plumes in its broken wing; it is, a convulsion quivers through its little frame, its eyes and dies. You walk on. You forget it. You t morning. The garden is as full of song. Your no note. Yet God saw and noted that little bird go

think that he who clothes the lily and sees when it is who keeps watch over the birds and sees when each has no care, no thought, no sympathy for your soul when an evil power comes up to blacken it, and kill like all the fragrance and song out of it? No! no! ing is not my God. Neither in supplication nor in my hands lifted to such a being. My friends, I dare to here are black days ahead of me, that the future will be st, and that more than once I shall stand in great near death; but there never will come an hour, from nt to my dying gasp, whether I live rightly or wrong- en God will not stand in love by my side, when all a do will not be done to save me from danger, and my death.

rmore, the nearness of God to us is seen in the various es of our life and growth. Now it is hard to analyze es and causes of growth. Ask the rose how it grows. "Whence came your sweetness, and the royal colour of es?" and the rising volume of its fragrance is your only It cannot say how much it owes to the sun, how he shower, how much to the cloud, nor whether day brought most of perfume and beauty to it. So it is soul. You ask an aged Christian—that sweetest s all, that one best tinted and ripened for heaven, ame her purity, her patience, her calm reliance and of hers which shines in the horizon of her closing life, as the evening star, when it hangs like a great ae western rim of the heavens—and can she tell you? hether God was nearer to her in youth or age, in joy or hours of obedience or the uprising of great rebellions, in

sickness or health, strength or weakness, she knoweth not. She only knows that she is as she is through the grace of God.

This thought is full of the plumage of golden wings, and lifts the heavy-hearted up. You may grope in darkness, or walk in light, but he unto whom the light and darkness are one is ever with you. You may moan or rejoice, but that ear, sensitive to every human cry, hears you the same. You may be standing erect, with the flush of a great triumph in your eyes, or lying prone in the dust crushed under a greater defeat; but the Lord is with you still. The heavens may be warm or cold, the air filled with sunshine or driving sleet; you may come like a lamb healthy and white from play, or crawl to the door soiled with dirt and gore, and cruelly torn by wolves, but the Shepherd is ready to admit and welcome you to the fold.

Is there some one, then, whose nature is torn and stained? Indeed, who of us is white and whole? Is there a man or woman who has been in the last years of life like a sheep among wolves, and who is ready to fly from danger and pain to the fold of God's love? If so, I bid you come. Come as I came. Come just as you are. Wait for nothing, but *come*. Do you think that the blood on the fleece, and the marks of the teeth on the throat, ever kept a sheep from the fold, ever caused it to be turned away? And do you imagine that the failures of your past, the ghastly secrets of your life, the scars of your sinfulness, the taint of your inward defilement, will cause Christ to turn you away? My friend, never believe it.

Answer me this: Did a mother ever send a child away because it was hungry? Did a father ever disown a boy because he was sick and in pain? And did God ever refuse to pardon a sinner because he was sinful? What does your heart say? What does the Bible say? Say! It says that God "would not that any should perish; but that all might come to the knowledge of the truth, and live."

Oh, the power of that blood shed on Calvary! Who can estimate it? Is there any scarlet so deep that it will not wash it white as snow? Is the crimson of any guilt so red that, touched by

it, the crimson shall not be white as wool? Ask the thief how he came to be in heaven, and he will say, "The blood admitted me here." Ask Paul if it was his labour, his self-denial for the truth's sake, his unflinching constancy, or his heroic virtues, which gained him the crown he wears, and the fadeless wreath? And he will exclaim, "No brother, no! it was not my constancy, nor my self-denial, nor my labours and sufferings; the blood alone gained me all this." That was the equivalent which satisfied Divine justice, and gave to mercy the opportunity of exercise. And how will any of us gain that entrance to heaven for which we hope? By our prayers, think you? by our works? by any worth or worthiness in us? I warn you not to believe it. On the merits of the blood, if at all, we shall stand acquitted before God.

But some say that there is no need of the blood. My friends, does the soiled garment need the soap? does the withered and lying grass need rain? does the earth need the sun? does guilt need pardon? Then do you and I, and every soul that has acted out its nature in sinfulness, need the atoning, reconciling blood of the Saviour. Why, look at your past. I speak to you who have been tossed about on the wild waves of life, who have been lifted and cast down, who have suffered and sinned. So far as the world knows, so far as the world judges, it is an easy, innocent, and comfortable past. But in the light of Heaven and the light of our consciences, in the light of our own knowledge, it is a grim and ghastly past—a past we dare not show, we dare not face. Who here would live over his past, do over all his old deeds, think over his old thoughts, go through with all his old experiences? Not one. Prepared or unprepared, you say, fit or unfit, the grave is welcome. One life is enough such as I have lived. I have no heart to repeat it. If there is such a thing as purity, if there is such a thing as holiness, if there is such a place as heaven—their source, their home, their eternal residence—then must I find a Saviour outside and above myself. This is the conviction of every heart that has intelligently measured itself by the Bible standard. If you would know how



near God draws to you to-day, behold that he does it in the blood of his Son, in the privileges of the consecrated hour, in the best impulses of your heart, in the fears of the past we can never wholly escape, in the hopes of that future toward which in thought we fly, as a bird, tired and heavy-laden, with set wings and a glad cry, swoops down to her nest.

I have spoken to you of the nearness of God as a fact in our daily life; but what makes that nearness of none effect? what hand is it that cuts the golden wires along which God telegraphs his messages of love? what is it in our atmosphere which blurs and distorts his face until it becomes a fearful visage to our eyes, and full of dread? It is sin; not sin in the abstract as a principle, but sin as committed, sin as indulged. No man hates you so much, no man shrinks from looking you in the eye so much, as he who has ill treated you. Let a man hate you whom you have injured, and there is an end to his enmity. Reparation frank and full puts an end to his hard feeling toward you, and relays the foundation of prostrated friendship. But let a man hate you without cause, save such as his envy, or spite, or bigotry, or vanity supplies, and his hate is endless. The worst enemy you can have is the man who should be your best friend; that man's enmity is devilish. Between that person and you is a great gulf which his own conduct and feeling have digged; and no generosity, no frankness, no honorable treatment, on your part can bridge it. Well, so it is with us in our wickedness toward God. Sin separates us from him; sin converts all his love into a source of terror; sin makes the thought of his nearness a dread. By so much as you do wickedly, by so much does God become a being to flee from and avoid; sin takes all the courage out of a man, and makes him cowardly. How many have died in agony from this cause! Ay, men robust and brawny, who could look along the glistening barrel into their antagonist's eyes at twelve paces and not flinch, have cried out and screamed, and made the chambers they died in, ring with their screams and terror. Why? Why did they *shrink* from the approaching darkness? Why did their boasting

depart and their hearts sink within them as they saw God, whom they had disobeyed and scoffed at and defied, drawing near to them?—why? Because they had disobeyed and scoffed at and defied him. That is why they were frightened, and dreaded to enter his presence. That is the whole philosophy of it. If any of you desire to die easily, live rightly, as the spirit directs; do this, and you will go to your grave as a man weary with honest toil goes to his couch at night, glad that the day at last is ended, and the time for sleep and pleasant dreams has come.

Sin not only separates us from God, but from our fellow-men also. There is something delightful in human fellowship. It is sweet for heart to commune with kindred heart. It is sweet to share our joys and divide our sorrows with those we love; sweet is it to feel that you are known and know; sweet the interchange of thought and sympathy, the mingling of common hopes, the division of burdens and cares. But sin shuts the mouth and closes the heart. It breaks the circuit and interrupts the current. Guilt makes us dumb. Our words by day, our dreams by night, become so many avenues of terror. It divides love from love, and thereby chokes up the very springs of comfort and help. Sin is loneliness. Sin is seclusion. Even fellowship in guilt loosens not the gag. He who goes over Niagara cannot take his friends with him.

Am I correct in this? Is this mere word-painting, or accurate analysis? Frightfully accurate! But, friends, we cannot always conceal our guiltiness; we cannot for ever keep our dungeon. The jealously guarded key will at last be snatched from our hand, the doors of our secrecy burst open, and all the hidden things will come trooping out and stand revealed to God and man. What will that shame, what will that exposure be! Mark you, I am not appealing to fear. I seek to spring no trap of conviction upon you. This is statement, not exhortation. This is intellectual analysis,—an attempt to get at the core of the matter, to catalogue, and set in array before you, the elements and material for future reflection. This is all. Still it is wise to anticipate the future, and, my friends, when the hour

of exposure shall come, as it surely will, how will you stand? When all that is in your character shall be revealed, all that you have covered with evasion be dragged forth, all that you have veiled be brought under the focus of that last unavoidable investigation, what will be the result? My friends, you and I may differ on other things, but we, knowing ourselves, know this,—that if you and I are not covered, are not protected in that hour by the mercy of God, we shall stand utterly hopeless, universally abhorred, and universally condemned. That is our only hope. Should that fail us—I check myself; I have no heart to describe that awful contingency. Some steadier hand than mine must draw the dark perspective which stretches with ever-thickening blackness into eternity.

Here, then, I pause. Into the life which awaits you on the morrow,—if morrow shall be to us,—I dismiss you. Its loneliness, its temptations, its trials, await you at the door. Amid whatever of solitude, amid temptations numberless, amid trials not a few, remember that God is near you. The stars are distant, but God is this side the stars. The heavens are remote, but he who rules them from centre to their outermost circumference walks on your right hand and on your left. Sleeping or waking, laughing or weeping, coming in or going out, the Lord is ever with you. This never forget.

## POSITIVE RELIGION.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

*"Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."—MATTHEW v. 17.*

**I**NASMUCH as the Jewish ceremonial law was to be abolished by this Christ, and inasmuch as the state laws, so far as they were cruel and unjust, were also about to be set aside, the Saviour must have alluded here to the moral law in its broadest sense, as being written or unwritten. He had just enumerated several of these higher laws, such as "Blessed are the pure in heart," "Blessed are those that hunger and thirst after righteousness." After enumerating quite a number of sublime principles, he said that whoever should break the least of these commandments, and teach men so, should be least in the kingdom of heaven; and the converse also was stated. Thus we perceive that Christ in this great chapter had risen to an upper air, far above the ceremonial law, and far above those state laws that had been valuable in a particular time, but formed no part of the world's perpetual and unchanging good. Among the everlasting law and prophets which Christ came not to destroy, he soon includes what we now call the golden rule and the law of loving even one's enemies. In a word, Christ came not as an innovator, or a disturber of the world's peace, but as the best friend of man, to set in clear light what had been standing in

deep shadow. He was a progress along a path in which men were already walking, but with such slowness and such stumbling as to awaken Divine pity. From this text, therefore, I shall ask you to draw the lesson of positiveness in religion, a lesson of warning against that unbelief which seems so popular in our day. By unbelief I do not mean that form of it which simply rejects what is called the orthodox faith, but that form of it, now prevalent, which distrusts everything hitherto grouped under the name of religion, from the being of a personal God to the doctrine of a future existence. The unbelief of Thomas Paine and Hume was chiefly against any revealed religion, but the unbelief of our day is against even a natural religion, and is little less hostile to a Christ than to a God.

Against that criticism of the present which is not a development so much as a destruction, I would love to argue in favour of positivism, of fulfilment rather than of this interminable and dreary destruction of old ideas. Let us first notice that thought has its habits just as the drinking man or the opium eater, or as has the benevolent man or the warrior. When the benevolent man walks through the streets of a city he hears every cry of distress from man or brute, and when the military soul passes along the same thoroughfare he sees soldiers in the workmen, and cavalry chargers in the horses that draw the carriages upon the avenues. But there is nothing in nature that limits habit to any one department of life. All of nature's laws are universal, and hence that peculiar condition called habit will attach itself to the logical faculty as readily as to the appetite of the drunkard, or the gait of one who walks, or the tones and gestures of one who speaks. It will come to pass that the reasoning power will, in successive periods, acquire habits that will carry it beyond propriety, beyond wisdom, and make it a slave of custom rather than the wise king of society. In the age preceding our own, reason operated chiefly in the domain of the marvellous. Not having found the modern great premise that the universe is pervaded by general law, but having adopted another major premise, that God and Satan came forward

by with new and independent events of good or evil, the of that period busied itself in finding in what dream or occurrence these mysterious wonder-workers had last d, and what lessons were to be drawn from the miracles erday or last night. The great universe of law had not en upon their intellects or hearts. Such became their f expecting the miraculous that all ordinary events dis- them by their monotony, and left them longing for a daily t from lawless powers of the air. In such iron chains t habit hold the past that even Luther hurled his ink- t the devil, and Sir Matthew Hale saw old women d of witches which bore these aged people through the l made omnipresent and fiendish persons, who, to all t appearances, were at home innocent, and even gentle ctionate. To overthrow this base of reasoning that the as ruled by two powers, God and Satan, who invaded life afresh each day with events without human cause, stitute a platform of law, making the world intelligible causes and effects in a degree attainable or avoidable, mmense task, for society had, in all its long career, been t with, and entangled among, the mysteries of supersti- lief, and to escape the habit was like asking a new era to new order of souls. But vast as the task was, it was un- a consciously and unconsciously, and year by year visions ams, and miracles, and witches, and goblins and ghosts pelled from the only place where they ever existed— in of man. Look back for a moment and see what a of superstition had to be cut away from man's shoulders; was not like cutting the straps of a camel's load in the but it was like removing a tumour from the brain itself. long way from the time when Romulus and Remus were by a wolf to the time when Luther saw Satan, and when holic church saw Luther's soul borne to hell by a pro- of ravens, and when the same church saw the Virgin standing upon a beautiful hillside, and to our own s who would not cross their knife and fork upon their

plate for fear of a dire calamity, the human family has been the perfect victim of a logic which reasoned not from a basis of a universe of law, but a basis of divine and satanic originality and caprice.

In the conscious and unconscious work of overthrowing this past, human logic was compelled to become destructive. Before, it had believed everything. Now its first duty was to doubt. It was compelled to distrust everything in order that it might urge a reform. Luther himself was a transition between credulity and scepticism, for though he retained much superstition, he pleaded for new light. He warred against the old church and against the old music, and against the prevailing practice of medicine, so he is seen as a point where the old is dying away and the new coming into life. Now the lesson to be inferred from these old facts is that reason has for generations near by been busy in the work of destruction. It has had to tear down a civilization badly founded and badly built, and it has, therefore, to-day, the associations of destructions, and ruins, and débris, and, at last, instead of having a habit of perfect credulity, it has reached, I fear, the habit of perfect destruction. If, as we have said, mind may form its habits—and, indeed, it evidently does form them—and if for three hundred years it has been destroying the awful follies of thousands of years, may we not well fear that it has come forth from this long slaughter of ideas, sighing, like an Alexander, for other worlds to conquer? When we behold a reason in thousands of public places, and in a still larger multitude in what we call “private life,” busy taking down the ideas of God, and worship, and sin, and virtue, and of a future life, we cannot but feel that reason has formed, or is forming, a passion of destruction which will soon leave mankind nothing in its hands except eating and drinking, and death. As it was difficult or impossible for Alexander to combine a love of war and a love of peace, so it seems impossible for our modern reason, coming in from the glorious victories of a hundred battle-fields, to repose in the peace of the Sermon on the

at, or the world's old cardinal truths of religion. I  
 ss there is nothing that may command a halt to the  
 on of destructive criticism, for, like Napoleon, it is free to  
 oy worlds as long as it can find them; but while no one  
 : power to check, yet we all have the privilege of  
 pting to advise or dissuade, and of commending a path  
 : than that of destruction.

to this destructive inquiry about God, reducing him to an  
 en or an unconscious, unknown agency, we may well recall  
 ct that there is no moral proposition which may not, by  
 ame devotion to scepticism, be stricken out from the  
 gue of beliefs. Logic, if well followed, may lead us to  
 whether there is such a thing as beauty—whether there  
 h a thing as honour—such a thing as benevolence—such a  
 as mind—such a thing as gratitude or pure affection.  
 . it comes to a search for perfect assurance, then we soon  
 the moral world, for there is no perfect assurance in it or  
 art of it, and hence the logic which seeks that assurance  
 nly destroy. It must come back each evening, saying,  
 re is no virtue, no sin, no mind, no God." When logic  
 as you and me that God is a law or a widespread blind  
 y, let us not be deceived, for all it has done is to take  
 our God. It has not given us a positive origin of the  
 ese, for, if positiveness is unattainable, reason will in a  
 ears confess itself to be as uncertain about its data as it is  
 about the data of the Christian. Perfect assurance is  
 s impossible to a free religionist or atheist as it is to the  
 ian. Remembering, therefore, that there is no moral idea  
 auty, or love, or soul, that may not be denied, and  
 ibering, too, that the assurance that there is a God is  
 s logically equal to the opposite belief, why should we not  
 on a criticism that only destroys, and clasp to our souls  
 and things we possess, and, Christ-like, live not to destroy,  
 fulfil. The worth of life, and its happiness, too, have  
 s come from the affirmation of such propositions as demand  
 . Life is valuable according to its love, not according to



its hate. It is of little value to hate sin unless that implies an active love of virtue. The former gives only a refrain, a refusal to act badly; the latter gives positive virtuous action.

The "free religion," so called, which denies our idea of prayer, dissuades from hymn, and from hope in a future life—does nothing but empty the mind and the heart, and hence can never build up a great life unless emptiness of soul is one of the foundations of greatness. All the moral greatness of the past is based upon the assumption of such notions as God, and worship, and immortality, and benevolence, and virtue, and duty. The great names all grow up out of such a soil. These propositions filled the old hearts that made this good world which we enjoy, with its education, its liberty, its morals, its religion. It is too late, it seems to me, to ask mankind to empty its mind of all these old, grand ideas, and then expect a grandeur of character to spring up from nothingness as a soil, and to grow in a space which has no rainfall, no dew, no sunshine, but which is only a vacuum. To expect a good soul to germinate in a soil of negation, and grow in a vacuum, is to cherish a frail hope; and yet this is the prospect to which what is called "free religion" is itself hastening and inviting us.

The exact antithesis of this emptying process is Jesus Christ, and all who follow him. He came to fulfil. Under the method of modern unbelief the life of man daily becomes narrower. The belief in a God, and the attendant worship of him, with all its trust, and hope, and virtue, has occupied a vast space in human life; and when to this we add the kindred ideas of heaven and endless existence, we have a vast world of thought and sentiment, which, when taken away from the heart, must leave life narrow indeed. But thus exactly does the criticism of to-day narrow life, and transform it from a stream that widens into an ocean, into a little thread which runs between some chemical action and a grave. Modern criticism seems a pursuit of the infinitely little, a search for the microscopic atom, not only of man's body, but of his virtue and hope. Reason being just as powerful for the Christian's God as against him, the

scales should be easily turned in the Christian's favour by the weight of those positive actions, and duties, and pleasures, and hopes, with which it occupies the soul. It fills the human life to overflowing. The radical unbeliever must sit down in despair. Unbelief says, "I believe not in God, hence not in prayer, not in virtue, not in sin, not in man's greatness, not in his future beyond the grave. Hence let me alone. I shall sit here for ever, and ponder, and wonder, and then die." But with as much of abstract reason upon his side, the positively religious man finds no hour, no year of nothingness, but all his years, be they fourscore, are full of activity and hope. There is no eclipse of the life that now is, for it is granted every pleasure, every pursuit, every honour, every industry. There have been religionists who have thought it necessary to make this life miserable in order that they might find joy in the next. It was the habit of semi-barbarous ages to suppose that each present thing will find its contradiction in the future, and that the poor shall be rich, and the rich poor. Following this old trace of disappointment, many not semi-barbarous still fear to be very happy to-day, lest such a state will forebode evil to-morrow. For reasons evident and obscure, there have been religionists, Christians indeed, who have made this life wretched that the next may be its opposite and be happy; but this folly of yesterday counts no more against Christianity than the errors of old astronomy or old politics weigh against the real truth in those sciences.

Religion grants everything to this life that belongs to human nature. It is the angel of the street and the house, carrying to one integrity and benevolence, to the other love and tenderness. Did religion not come and wreath your homes with evergreens and flowers, and blend with all that is joyous in youth or old age? Does it not adorn your marriage altars and breathe its benediction there? And when we bury the dead, whatever of peace and consolation there is in the last hour comes up from the lips of religion. As understood, at last, religion is the angel of joy to this world, and hence is a grand fulfilling of its

most sacred longings and prophecy. And then by its vast estimate of a life beyond, by the swelling music of immortality, it expands the idea of life on this shore, and thus dignifies man by loading him with this infinite outcome of himself. When Gustavus Adolphus, of Sweden, saw before him the destiny of king, his heart and mind began to live in a nobler atmosphere. In morals, in study, in heroism, he immediately arose above his fellow-men, and died at last leaving mankind to wonder whether he was not the noblest man that had graced the earth. But this spiritual greatness he drew from the realization of a great future. Coming events cast not only their shadow, but their light and music and inspiration, before. Our positive Christianity thus not only fills each day full of its own special joy and work and peace, but it pours around the present the atmosphere of a great future, for which destiny, greater than that of a throne in Sweden, the mind and heart secretly gird themselves in their early and later years. Thus, while a destructive criticism, which in our days often passes under the name of reason, and often under the ambiguous name of "free religion," is plainly seen narrowing the life which it calls "broad," is plainly seen sitting down in despair, powerless to say more, or do more, or hope more, the positive faith of Christendom widens life in every particular of its thought or emotion or work. The religion of Christ is a wonderful fulfilment of mankind's conclusions in morals and in blessed anticipation. The great heathen world is not overthrown in the New Testament, but is fulfilled there in its essential thoughts. The morals and prayers of Aurelius and Seneca, the maxims of India, the prayers of the Greek prophets and oracles, the treasures of the past world, are found in the Gospels, as flowers cast into the fabled Alpheus were said to come forth fresh in a far-off island, at the fountain of Arethusa. A distinguished teacher recently from Siam says that the Buddhists accept of Christ most readily when they compare his spiritual teachings with their own, and thus find him to be only the perfection of their own reason and sentiment. They love him when they find that he has not come to

7, but only to lead higher by a similar but more sublime

lessons, therefore, which I would offer to those who do not be members of any Christian church, and who may perhaps, all of them at least, depend upon this hour for any aid in religion, are these:—

In a critical age that has so many errors to be destroyed, and acquires a destructive habit; and against this habit one must guard, lest, instead of being a light to guide us, reason be only mildew to blight a world once beautiful.

The soul grows great and useful and happy, not by what it denies, but by what it cordially affirms and loves. Distrust of death of the soul, belief is its life. The just shall live by it. Infidelity is the abandonment of life—a suicide of the

Should you not all seek union with some positive, active, praying, trusting church? What errors any Christian church may hold will not harm half so much as its active truths lack. Let the church you seek be “free,” not free in its selfishness, free in its atheism, but free in its deliverance from superstition, and free in its noble manhood, that fears no one and no god. Let the church you seek be broad, but not broad in destructiveness, but in its soul and hopes and charity; not by the absence of God, but by his infinite presence; not like the Sahara in its treeless, birdless, dewless sands; not like the Arctic sea in perpetual silence and ice, but like an infinite paradise, full of all verdure, all fruits, all industry, all happiness, all worship, wide enough in its scope and confines to repeat the Saviour’s invitation, “Come,” to all the children of this outer wilderness.

## THE SEPULCHRE IN THE GARDEN.

BY REV. H. N. POWERS.

*"Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus."*—JOHN xix. 41, 42.

SO it was in view of a pleasant scene that Jesus died, and in the midst of a garden that he was laid. It is always thus on earth that dark and bright realities stand in contrast. Life and death confront each other. There is a sepulchre in every garden. How aptly does this faithful touch of the Evangelist illustrate all that is sincere in human experience! Taking the fact described here in its deep suggestiveness, let us read in its typical illumination a chapter of life that is common to us all.

And, first, I observe that each man has a garden. It may not be that where the outward sense is regaled with fruits and flowers and odorous airs—not that, but a sacred enclosure of the heart. No life, indeed, is without its bright spot—hidden away, perchance, among sad memories, yet reverently cherished. As on bleak hill-sides of splintered rock green things nestle, and a flower here and there springs up, so in human experience there is something still bright where exist poverty and corroding care. None have been without their dream of a good to come. Some fair hope has glided into the heart. Some true and tender feeling once had place, and is not *wholly* forgotten, even if the man has wandered far in sin.

There is yet the odour of a past delight in days that have gone under the cloud. Years ago the roses and lilies were planted; many a pleasant blossom has unfolded since, though watered with tears. Very beautiful are some of these gardens, dear friendships, with the engaging interests of home, noble plans for self-culture and benevolence; very beautiful with generous trusts, and holy endearments, and the music of sunshine of dreams. All have their garden; but, guard it as they may, it shall be the scene of tragedy. It contains a sepulchre.

The generous and aspiring youth seems, indeed, to stand on the border of a land that will never lose its morning freshness. As yet no disappointment has dampened his ardour. His heart throbs with enthusiastic resolve. In thought he walks through unfading bowers, and sees the grapes of joy ripen for his hand; but this radiant landscape contains a tomb. He does not know it, attracted by so much that enamours his gaze; but it is there, a new tomb, and it shall not be vacant long. For, as years pass on bearing him to manhood, does the garden remain as redolent of life as it did? The rude feet of care have trampled down many a blossom, and decay has touched everything that once seemed very fair. Aye, there apart, doubtless is the grave of what seemed too lovely to be buried—of our hopes, feelings that once warmed into being many a noble design, and aspirations that withered in the hot glare of an unsympathizing world. Who shall tell how much is buried there? Behind the stone that is rolled against the wall; who of you, my friends, does not know that something lies buried and still?

But, as regards the experience of practical life, where is the man without a grave? It is not merely the man who has fallen from a prosperous fortune to obscurity and penury that has a sepulchre over which to mourn. There are tombs in the mansions of the rich, the gifted, and the great. Baffled purposes, shattered friendships, exhausted energy, the corpse of many a noble endeavour, the lost inspiration of eager manhood when

the path to victorious life seemed garlanded with light—all this, and more, speaks of death. And so in the great world of action everywhere men feel, as the years vanish, that something dear has passed to the burial. With all their success, they are conscious of painful change and decay. They have not gained all that they sought. They are not what they expected, and perhaps strove to be. Shrouded now in darkness and silence are the images of a happier and better life. They have a sense of absence, which the sight of all their possessions and honour cannot relieve. And how often does the gloom of the sepulchre shadow the fair treasures that they have gathered around them! In all the ardours of life they are confronted with the dread solemnities of death.

But sadder still is the tomb in the garden of the affections. If anything on earth is sacred, it is home, with its hallowed privacy, its joyous intimacies, its endearing and pure attachments. This is not the place to look for gloom. Yet the sepulchre is here; and it will not be empty long. Though no dark omen for the present overshadow it, still sad change finally comes. There is a vacant place by the hearthstone. A smile has passed away, and voices that gladdened the soul. That home may be pleasant still, and the casual visitor, in the sight of its delights, may not think that it contains a place of burial. Yet, though the spot is sealed, it is not forgotten. To be sure, the great world goes on as before the sorrow came. Hands are busy, and the brain active, and the heart holds closer its remaining treasures. There is carefulness in the household, and life takes hold, perhaps, earnestly of temporal interests, and so the garden of home may seem to bloom again; yet over against it stands the sepulchre. Bereaved hearts know it is there; and oh! how they linger at times around it—how they return to it when none know the burden of their memories! Face to face with all human prosperity, with all the throbbing pulsations of life, is the place and reality of death. That lone man, who in the fierce struggle of existence has, to the observer's eye, become *indurated* to feeling and sentiment, could doubtless lead you to

green mound that is still moistened with his tears. The press shades many a scene that seems to some all sunshine. Time has borne away the freshness and buoyancy of life. There is grief over the living lost—the wayward and erring ones that paternal tenderness could not melt, nor gracious tutelage restrain. The garden is the sepulchre. If you are full of youthful enthusiasm, it is there. If you are struggling for a true and long and useful life, it is there. It is there if you are dowered with opulence and power. And it is well that it should be so; well that we learn our frailty, our ignorance, our sin; well that we be disciplined and educated, according to God's methods, for our eternal home. For with man's sinful nature and tendencies, how fearful might be his career in transgression, and how reckless his presumption upon the forbearance of God, had he never suffered from the evil within and without him! Now, on every hand, he is taught his insufficiency as he stands alone. He finds that he has a nature that cannot be satisfied with visible possessions, and that his life is meaningless and incoherent if interpreted by this state of being alone. Ever in his baffled efforts and his physical weakness, in the greatness of his plans and the smallness of his achievement, he is reminded of a sphere of being where the hindrances to his happiness and holiness shall be removed. So, reading his sad experiences by the light of the ever-blessed gospel, he knows they are wise teachers for his guidance here, and prophets of the glory that awaits the obedient and believing. And oh! if in the faith of Jesus he is following on, through the Spirit of all Truth, to the deeper knowledge of his fellowship and love, nothing that is precious now in the grave shall be lost.

It is the power of this conquering Saviour over death and the grave that makes our Easter joy so pure and full. Upon the divine truth of his resurrection depends our everlasting welfare; round this stupendous reality revolve all the permanent and exalted interests of life. In the garden was a new sepulchre: there laid they Jesus. But this Jesus has God raised from the dead, whereof, says St. Peter, we are witnesses. Mary saw



him as she turned away weeping from the empty tomb. The hearts of the two disciples who journeyed to Emmaus burned within them as he talked with them by the way. More than once to the astonished apostles he appeared, with words of authority and love. Thomas thrust his hand into the spear-mark in his side, and with his fingers felt where the cruel nails had pierced his hands. He ate with his friends of fish and honey on the seashore. Five hundred brethren saw him at once, and recognized their Lord. And, after the gracious ministries of forty days in Galilee, he disappeared from their sight. All the ancient prophecies respecting his sufferings and death were fulfilled. The work of his humiliation and mercy was accomplished. The grave could not hold him. Dying, behold! he lived. The demonstration of the divine good-will was complete. An expiring Saviour, a risen Lord; a suffering servant, a King of Glory leading captivity captive; a victim of the world's evil, a Redeemer from all transgressions; cold and silent in the grave, and in the might of his divine nature pushing back the bolts of death and vanquishing the King of Terrors; bearing in his innocence the burden of a sinful race, and opening the gates of everlasting life to the redeemed who come to Zion—henceforth it was "Jesus and the resurrection" that made the gospel a power on the earth. The dark wall that seemed to enclose this brief existence was broken down. Life meant something glorious in the light of the cross and the empty sepulchre. Though its burden was heavy and its paths rough, it could bear a divine interpretation. After all, man might be saved in body and soul. He was not born to perish like the brute, with all his aspirations and loves. So apprehending, through the spirit of Jesus, the life that was given for him, he feels that the resurrection which is begun within him is the pledge of the glorious one to come. For that sense of blessed possibilities in the thrilled and exultant soul, that peace which deepens in sweet communion with the Lord, that hold of the heart on spiritual reality which has about it no odour of the grave—the ardours, the hopes, the affections which are born in the em-

of a conquering and undoubted faith—these tell not of but of life—pure, joyous, winged life. And so what is in the Scripture of the fruitions of the sanctified is portrayed in the experience of the soul that is more and more formed into the likeness of Christ the Lord. There is by a foretaste of immortality.

My friends, the grave in the garden, to such a one, is not one of everlasting stillness and decay. The stone shall be rolled away. If you have died unto sin, and are buried with Christ in his death, you shall rejoice in the final resurrection of the dead that can contribute to the bliss of the soul in the eternal home. You know now how hard it is to wait in the loneliness of a bereavement that casts such a shadow on your path; patience can have its perfect work as you look forward to the reunions of the blest. To think of the perpetual peace that shall there abide, the divine security which nothing evil shall invade, the circle there that shall never be broken, the light and the face of Infinite Love that shall never go out, the rest and the home of that unmolested home where all that is dear is preserved safe in the arms of God—to even think of this now is a strong inspiration to lift us above the world. Yes, there shall be no death there. Jesus has conquered death, and in the resurrection those who are his while in the flesh will rise with him. No matter where they slept, or what the ages that have passed on the mortal part that was dissolved, they shall be put on their glorified bodies, and enter the habitations prepared for them from the foundation of the world. Their tomb shall be closed. Their hearts shall never ache for those who return no more. There none shall bear the cross and the cruel trial. No evil tongue and no cruel hand can be there. There shall be no crying, nor any more pain; no guile of the serpent to seduce, and no sinful nature with which to contend. His face shall lead them to the still waters of his perfect peace. His face shall shine the light in which shall blossom all bliss. Sweeter shall be their joy as they rise to clearer visions of his beauty, and are drawn into the intimacies

of a more transporting fellowship. If now you are his by a spiritual resurrection to the knowledge of his love, what may you not anticipate in the abounding blessedness of your immortality?

But how dark is your prospect if you do not believe upon his name, nor love his appearing! The sepulchre in the garden of your life is then the symbol of the death which awakens to no celestial fruition. Out of Christ, you lose all that can make your immortality glorious. The day of the full liberation of the blest from the thralldom of the grave shall be the day of your wretched doom. Oh, day of most sorrowful sorrow to the wicked—day of triumphant joy to the sanctified! The grave cannot hold them. Their garden no longer contains a sepulchre. Death himself is swallowed up in victory. The immortal shores are gained. We see Jesus as he is. Only a little longer, faithful heart, have you to wait—a few more nights of trial, a few more graves closed in the garden, a little more watching by the tomb, the cross borne a little further, a few more drops tasted from the cup of the Lord's sorrow, heart and hope drawn a little more closely to him—and then the unfettered life, the resplendent glory, the full joy of seeing him face to face who redeemed you and loves you, and of abiding with him for ever. "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly: Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

## Vintage Gleanings from the American Pulpit.

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I want to tell you the story of the old Italian master—this represents the old Mosaic dispensation. He gave a student canvas and told him to draw a line from this point to that (upwards). The student carelessly or thoughtlessly drew the line down from that point to that. The master said, "Did I not tell you to draw it the other way?" and left him. Again the student was careless; the master remained, and finding that the man was incorrigible, he put his thumb through the canvas, tearing it from top to bottom. The world has done that with the old covenant, and now God has condescended to make a new agreement with us. He has given to us in the life and death of Christ the law of love, and instead of commanding us as King, he commands as a Father.

The whole experience of Christendom points to one motive power, without which no church of Christ can abide: and that is Christian piety, consecration to God and Christ. No church or denomination ever succeeded or can succeed in any other way. Enthusiasm for reformed doctrine, for liberty of thought, for philanthropic activity, for social and æsthetic advancement, for scholarship in the clergy and culture in the people, lasts while these valuable elements of church life are the especial characteristics of some denomination. But, sooner or later, all such partial reforms become the common property of the whole church, and the bodies that have been living out of their advocacy must now fall back upon the one common motive power of Godliness, or dry up and perish.

We are placed here for a benevolent purpose; and that theology which makes the world darker than it is; which depresses the candid, truth-seeking mind, instead of cheering and encouraging it; that destroys the incentives to hopeful labour, and the inspirations of love and duty, and that confuses the ideas of justice and righteousness in sincere souls, is not a good theology.

Refuse no life giving truth because it bears not the label of some favourite name. Whatever is food for the immortal life, accept as from above. There is but one fountain of good. The Spirit has a variety of administrations, but there is the same Lord. Seek the bread that does not perish. "Life is more than meat, and the body more than raiment." Every word of God is nourishing to the soul. But our Lord is the Eternal Word—the true bread that cometh down from heaven.

One revelation of God is his material universe, and the more we know of this, the better able shall we be to use the wondrous gift of life as it was designed. All knowledge is good, and that which instructs men to be holy is the best. While we attach an infinite value to the word of God as expressed in the Bible, we must not forget that by the word also were made the things that are seen. God expresses himself in all his works. "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge." There is really no antagonism in the revelations of the Almighty, his written word, and his infinite works. We see but a part now of the perfect meaning—enough to direct us to the way of everlasting life, but not the whole that may contribute to the possible advantages of man.

The love of God towards us is not a kind of severe charity, breaking the bread of his bounty only to the deserving and to those whose lives are cut after the strictest regulation pattern; but a warm, genial sentiment, rather, feeding, without question and without rebuke, all the hungry and the faint who will accept of its blessed provision; yea, casting far and near on the waters of life that bread which, if once eaten, forbids further hunger for ever.

## THE CHRISTIAN'S WORK.

BY REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."*—  
JAMES ii. 24.

WHEN the Apostles went out to preach the Gospel, Christ was the burden of all they proclaimed. They rehearsed the simple story of the incarnation, and called upon men to renounce their sins and come to God through the Redeemer. They did not take a text of Scripture, as we do, and expound that. They only wove the old Scriptures into the fabric of their story as they would prove that what they preached should not be considered strange, since it was only that which had been throughout the ages proclaimed.

As they preached, and the influence of the Gospel extended, others began to preach. New thoughts began to struggle into life, and new expressions were framed in which to clothe the thoughts. No thought being precisely the same in any two minds, and no expression being exactly equal to any thought, in the nature of things there must arise somewhat of confusion, and even, perhaps, somewhat of seeming contradiction.

This confusion and contradiction did actually begin in the very times of the Apostles, and some of the Epistles now included in the canon of our Scriptures were written with special endeavour to counteract existing difficulty. This

Epistle of James, doubtless, had such a purpose in view. Men then, as since, talked of faith and works; then, as since, they became confused, and, in their confusion, strayed into error. One thing this Epistle was written to tell us was, that faith without works was dead. The Apostle illustrates it by the life of Abraham, and then says:—"Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

There are few subjects connected with religion more practically important than this suggested by the text—few that have given rise to more discussion, and few that are still less distinctly understood.

One prime difficulty in our discussions upon any subject arises from our *mis*understanding each other. We do not enough define positions—still less do we define terms. Every subject has its different aspects. No two of us approach it from precisely the same angle. We try to express what we see, and sometimes, from the very poverty of language, the same man uses the same words in different senses. Then any word conveys a meaning to us only according to our knowledge and experience. When I use a word from my standpoint, you apply that word from yours, and the result is, with the same word, we are far from having the same thing. Suppose we had no perfect knowledge of the appearance of a human head, but each of us had seen one, and were called upon to describe it. If you had seen the full face, then you had seen the eyes, the nose, the mouth. If I had seen a profile, then I had seen the same features, but under a very different aspect. If another looks at the back of the head, then he sees not these features at all. The result is, our reports differ, and yet, in a measure, they are all true. Then if we were all talking of the profile, even no two of us, perhaps, would agree as to the exact point at which the perfect profile began. So, in any subject, one view melts into another. Blessed is he who knows that any subject has many sides—more blessed is he who, by patience and diligence, has seen more sides than one.

The better to understand each other, suppose we agree

to consider God's view of us—I mean this human unit, the human race, as strictly parental. Let us not divide the race into anything—as heathen and Christian, righteous and wicked—and let us suppose God looks upon us all as his children, not as a judge looks upon a criminal, without affection or real sympathy, but with a heart yearning with every instinct of divinest love. Let us also take the same view of mankind as we suppose God to take.

If it be asked whether this is a right and Scriptural view, I can only say, I think it is. If Scripture, or nature, or reason, or fact, says that God divides us in his affection, I have never seen it; I have looked for it, but I cannot find it. I find we are to some extent divided as to the degrees we receive of God's love, but, so far from its being God's doing, it is in spite of all he has done to prevent it. There are wicked men, and they are punished; but not with anything God hurls upon them, but only with that which God's love cannot prevent. God's machinery for keeping us from ruin is infinite. However wicked or criminal we may be, God is still the truest and best friend the universe has in it for us. There are none righteous; God would like to see us righteous—none Christian as God would like to see us Christian. We are all heathen, and all sinners—but a step from the best to the worst—the worst, but by God's grace, not so bad as it would be; and the best, not so good as by God's grace it ought to be. He had mercy upon all, and sent his Son that all might see that mercy, and return to the bosom of our Father's love. That love is the law out of which all things proceed, and to which all things must answer.

This will help us to define and understand what is meant by justification," "to justify." This is an expression which has been much used in theology, but very little used by Christ, and not by him at all in our ordinary theological sense; at least, I am not able to recall a passage in which it is so used by him. We all know what justice means—"the rendering to any one his right"—"conformity to truth, or reality." "Justification," and "to justify," are words kindred to the word justice.



"To justify" is "to prove a thing to be conformable to right." What we mean by right is, as God has made things. In the moral world certain things must be, as, in mathematics, twice two must be four. God must be love—love must be forgiving. "Justification" is conformity to that in moral being which the law of love has made right. If that has made it right that upon repentance and amendment we should have all our sins forgiven, then, when we have truly repented and amended, we are justified in believing our sins forgiven. We stand acquitted. If we would justify ourselves in any action, then we must show we have acted according to right. If we justify any act, then we cannot be visited with the penalty of a wrong act. If we have done a thing which is wrong by our law, and yet a thing under the circumstances justified by a higher law—if we kill a man, *e. g.*, which under one law is a wrong thing, and yet do it under the higher law of self-defence, we are treated as if we had not killed a man. So, if we have sinned, and we repent and amend, and God forgives, we are treated as though we had not sinned. Hence the theological sense of justification to treat as just one who to all appearance is guilty and deserving of punishment. Hence, as a still further sense, derived in consequence, it sometimes means pardon or absolution.

Now, the law of absolution, or pardon, is the law of God's love. It was made in the beginning, when all other things were made. It involved the atonement. I do not know why, but there is the fact across all time—graven in the instincts of the whole human race. Infinite wisdom so ordained. I do know that, but for the atonement, we could not have known the love of God. If my mother had neglected me, left me alone without an example or a word of counsel, I could not have known she loved me. I should have had reason to believe she did not love me. Her patience, her self-denial, her struggle to teach me and train me, they appeal to the depths of my being, and fill me with conviction of her love. Jesus Christ, from the bosom of the Father, made an atonement. It was virtually made in the beginning. It might have been made for other worlds as

well as ours, but whether it was or not, it was made for all our world. Jesus "tasted death for every man." "He died not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world." It was of God's own free love. "The free gift came upon all men to justification." The Universalist looks at this and says: "All men are saved." But look at it—we were all pardoned—but when you forgive a man a sin, you do not necessarily make him love you, and rid him of his sinfulness. The door of life was thrown wide open. If we would enter, God would give us liberally of eternal life and upbraid us not—never reap up anything. In a sense, we were all saved. The chains were tricken off. We were set free, and as free—free to go back and put them on again if we chose. Only, even then, God would not curse us, but restrain us, and help to find him out and come nearer to him. Being released was redemption. Being like him would be salvation. Only that must be our own act. God will not impose anything upon a moral being. The atonement made us free. God can have nothing in his moral kingdom by coercion, but all things by volition. The soul that comes to him must not only be convinced that there is no other God, but be thrilled with an increasing yearning to come closer to him, so that that soul shall never, in the cycles of being to come, wander away from him. The law of life in Christ Jesus was for all men, therefore for those before Calvary as for those after it. By means of it the Spirit of God dwelt with man to show him the way in which he ought to go. You find a moral sense among all the nations of the earth. That Spirit was with Enoch before the flood, and with Noah, and Job, and Abraham, and no nation has been without it. None living before Calvary knew much about the atonement; millions of them, absolutely nothing. None now know much. I am satisfied we do not see yet the beginning of that mysterious sacrifice upon Calvary. Millions still know absolutely nothing of it. Still its blessing to us is not according to our knowledge of it; it envelops us like an atmosphere; we live in it; we live by it. It is the all-pervading element of God's all-pervading love. You must perceive, in this

light, how absolutely true it is, that "there is no other name given under heaven whereby ye may be saved;" and how it is that any man living up to the light of God's Spirit—given him by means of this atonement—though he be in a heathen land, may still be saved; and how and why it is true that, "in every nation, he that feareth God is accepted with him." That is all that God wants; whether we know of Christ, or do not know of him, that is the very object for which the atonement was made, that we might "fear God and do righteousness." That builds us into a likeness of him, and that is salvation. It is not the degree of our knowledge of Christ that saves us, but the degree of our likeness to him through the Spirit of God. Even the Atonement himself—the very light of God—in guiding a soul to the kingdom, said not a word of the atonement itself, but only the result for which the atonement was made—"do this"—this that thou knowest to be right—"and thou shalt be saved." If they may do it who know not of Christ, through the light they have and the Spirit given to them, how undutiful, and therefore doubly lost, are they who, knowing Christ, do it not! Not because God condemneth, but that light is come into the world, and they love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

Now, this atonement had been foretold—it was foretold to a people whom God selected as a channel through which to convey the knowledge of it to the race. That people were too blind to perceive their work, and could not recognize the Messiah when he came. It is no use to say, "Suppose the Jews had recognized him and not crucified him: how, then, could the atonement have been made?" They were our representatives. Had we been a people who could appreciate Christ, we had then been as the angels, and so not needful of any atonement. The same cause which made the atonement necessary, made the crucifixion a fact. Beside, the crucifixion was not the whole atonement, as I shall presently show. The Jews, by mistaking the righteousness that God wanted, only acted a part as if in a play—and, so far from becoming truly religious guides, became the worst of

en. In their wrangling once with the Messiah, they asked in what they must do in order to do the works of God, and he replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." This is your work and the work of your race, that you accept me, a true guide into all the truth and blessings God designs for his children. As much as to say, as I did say on another occasion, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." By following me, you shall find the truth, and that truth shall lead into real life. That is the only road that leads to God.

This atonement then involved the incarnation. The incarnation was the atonement. The incarnation embraces the manger, and the grave and resurrection, and all between them—not one act, nor a few acts, but all—the virtue—the instruction—the works—Gethsemane—the cross—the tomb. That is what Jesus gave for us men, and for our redemption.

Sometimes, in speaking of a thing, we use a part for the whole. This is the whole atonement which "justifies" me or you, though I be sinners, in coming to God for forgiveness. But the Scripture says, "He rose again for our justification." It is more than once said, "We are justified by his blood." You see a prominent part—the culminating part of the thing—is put for the whole thing.

Then the Scripture changes the view—not as from God to man but as from us to God. We have been contemplating God's act toward us. It now turns to contemplate our act toward God. It speaks of us as availing ourselves of the atonement God has provided. Even the heathen believes in God's love and forgiveness, and fears God and works righteousness in that belief, though he know nothing of the law by which that forgiveness comes. We know of the law, and believe in the atonement, and come for it. There is belief in both cases, or we would not come. That belief brings us. Scripturally and theologically it is called faith—in our case it is faith in the atonement—the effect of God's love. In the heathen's case it is faith in God's love—the cause of the atonement. In either case it

is faith in God, and hence Paul, putting the hand that accepts for the thing accepted, says, "A man is justified by faith." Really, he is justified by the law of life in Christ Jesus, but his faith brings him there to accept it, and by a common figure it is said "his faith justifies him," or "he is justified by faith."

Then sometimes, when a spiritual thing has a physical sign, we use the sign for the thing signified. We speak of the cross as of the Gospel—of the cross, sometimes, as of Christ. Now there may be a body where there is no soul—a dead body; so there may be works where there is no faith—dead works. But in this mundane sphere—so far as we know—there can be no soul where there is no body. So there can be no faith where there are no works. "Faith without works is dead," *i. e.*, it is not at all—it is only a thing we dream of. If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of food, and you say unto them, depart in peace, be warmed and clothed, though you give them nothing they need, where is the profit? If your faith produces no more than another man's unfaith, then what is the good of it? Whoever is good for nothing is not saved. It matters not what he thinks. Even so, faith, if it hath not works, is dead. If you show me your faith without your works, you show me nothing. Abraham was justified by his works. But for his works we could not have known he had faith. The body is put with the soul—the sign with the thing signified—and you see therefore how that "by works a man is justified."

In a few words, of justification the love of God is the procuring cause—the atonement, in conjunction with our faith, is our availing means. Good works are the evidence of our faith.

Reason it, or Scripture it back again—only he that worketh hath any faith—or truly believeth—"not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." "You are my disciples if you do whatsoever I command you." This is the very purpose of the Gospel. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Only he that believeth can be saved. Without faith it is impossible to please

God. Truly believe, and thou shalt be saved ; truly believe, and you are saved.

Take other Scriptures again : " Every work shall be brought into judgment, whether it be good or evil." When you are at the bar of God your life will be on the witness stand. " Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." While salvation is extended to all, he alone receives it who accepts it, and each one has it in proportion as he is willing to receive it. So God is just, and the justifier of him that believeth." You and I are every day laying up treasure in heaven, or every day failing to lay up treasure in heaven. You will not have my reward, and I shall not have your reward. If you are close to Christ, great will be your gain ; if I am far from him, great will be my loss ; and our distance from him is not according to our creed, but according to our likeness to him.

Now, there is much said in the Scriptures about works. In all that Jesus Christ says and recommends, everything is very plain, and you must have observed how in the Gospels Christ constantly dwells upon works. Mark the difference between him and those that only borrow from him. It is when we come to Paul and the Epistles we find ourselves puzzled. Much is said of faith. Much is said of good works, the evidence of faith, and the unskilful reader is likely to get confused. In the early ages of the world men were yet too much in infancy to apprehend a pure thought. They had to be taught by signs and figures and symbols and outward representations, as we teach our children by maps and globes and artificial aids. The condition which rendered this a necessity, involved with it a very great danger, that of mistaking the representation for the thing represented ; just as if our children should attach a sacred value to lions and crabs, supposing them to be among the stars, because they are the signs of our zodiac. A stone was set up to commemorate the goodness of God. It became a god. A temple was built in which to worship, and lo ! they conceived that God was nowhere else but there. What was done as an expedient became a necessity. What was purely an accident became an

essence—commandments were made, and religion became mortal system. That which God intended to set us free turned men into slaves. For a very specific purpose a very peculiar system grew up among the Jews. The meaning of it they wholly mistook. The eternal law of which, in the beginning they had more than any nation, they merged into their ecclesiastical system. From being the most favoured people they became the most superstitious. They made a law as cruel as death, and as unyielding as the grave. Religion thus became, not what God made it—a thing to make us more true, more pure, more wise—but a thing having nothing to do with heaven or earth—an effigy, a toy, a thing to curse, and not to bless.

Christ came to do away old things—to make all things new—came “to call us unto liberty”—came to take us out of our minority into manhood, into pure thought, into truth and reality. Many thought they believed in him and understood him, but they could not rise above their old ideas, and insisted upon carrying the name of Christ into their old dead forms—in to circumcision and baptism, into the priesthood, and all the machinery of the old dead law. Paul resisted this with every energy of his being. In all his Epistles, especially that to the Romans, he endeavours to show that Christ is the one sacrifice, Christ the only Priest, Calvary the only altar; that henceforth God cares nothing for forms, but only for things; God wants in us sincerity, reality, because man wants truth, education, virtue, grace, mercy, love—no more toys and shadows. He denounces the law as that which killeth. “By the works of the law can no man be justified.” They blind the mental and spiritual eye; they make men more selfish; they are not life, but death. He recommends every grace and every virtue, all that is lovely and of good report, with an emphasis which has never been surpassed. In drawing his lines he used expressions which have been misunderstood. Things dovetailed into other things have been torn from their connections. These fragments have been magnified into doctrines, and Paul has been made an authority for very foolish things. Many went to an extreme directly opposite—that involve

the old law. Because a thing, a thought, a soul-verity must be apprehended in the mind, in the conscience, in the spiritual, irrespective of the form it might assume, men conceived that all outward acts or works were superfluous. They set to work—building grand castles in heaven, laying unction to the souls, pretending to be saints while not fit to live upon earth. Because faith must be an inward thing, they even went so far as to imagine the more they sinned the greater their faith. "How shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid." They did not perceive that God had made soul-verities for no other purpose than to be breathed into life. That was the mission not to make something artificial, but to put the real into the real, that which was alive into life, and so make life a living, a progression more and more into the peace and joy which we long for—more and more into the perfect day God has designed for us. No wonder James comes in to tell them to take notice that a man is justified by works, and not by faith

these two errors—the law on the one side and dead faith on the other—have been contending in the world against the truth, against man's real and highest good, ever since the days of the apostles. They are contending against it still. They have their fleets, their armies, their arsenals, their fortifications. They are sometimes to us to be working against each other, but it appears so. They are both together working against the truth, against man, as all error of necessity must. The one leads to us ignorance, superstition—the middle-ages fossilized, Dark Ages preserved; the other perpetuates pride, indifference to human good, wrapping oneself up in oneself. The two together have made history very nearly repeat herself—have brought us back to a heathen civilization, to great worldliness, to carnality, to great churches, to cravings after riches, to hating and grudging each other, to unrest and anxiety, to skepticism, to the gnawing question of how to live, to the abolition of marriage, to the adoption of divorce, to the scattering of families and the prevention of families, to the fact that men are



looking about for hermitages—in short, to the brink of endless calamity and ruin. The old law, ritualism—call it by what you will—is death. The self-complacency of Christians, the old dead faith—faith with works—the grand experiences and high hopes we talk about, and which withal we do nothing—it is death. In neither of them are we justified. We stand condemned. We have neither faith nor works. We need conversion. If we are upon either side we are against Christ, against God, against man, against our own souls. We need to have our souls converted, and our whole life-action inverted; otherwise, be God's mercy what it may be, our creeds what they may, we have failed to apprehend the Saviour. We have not come out of darkness into light, out of the power of Satan unto God. You see salvation is not something away off beyond the grave. Salvation is something here. If we are saved, the fact is proclaimed. If we are not saved, that fact is proclaimed too. You see how that we are justified by works, and not by faith only.

Now the thought occurs to me here, what are my good works? I confess I cannot mention one; all my greatest undertakings have been my greatest failures; I have never done one work which was not a marred, incomplete, and unsatisfactory thing. If there has been any goodness about it, that has only showed how the whole could have been and ought to have been better. David said, "in God's sight, could no man living be justified." Verily, no man, even in his own sight, if he knows how to see, can justify himself. But this helps us to see what the good works are which God requires. You send your child to do a given thing; you could do it yourself, and do it better; you could send somebody else to do it, and do it better; but that is not the thing. You want your child to learn how to do you want that child to manifest a spirit of obedience, of respect of desire to please. The child's work delights you accord to the spirit that animates it. You show it the imperfection its work, that in another attempt it may attain to a greater success. Gradually the child becomes like you. It is the spirit God wants in us all, that we may become like him. He wa-

that spirit right in the realities amid which he places us. We  
 confound good works with great works. God knows no such  
 thing in us as great works—that is impossible. If we under-  
 take a great work, that work is a meanness in God's sight.  
 God wants no great cathedrals and magnificent churches. The  
 Hindoos have those. The Moslems have those. The Jews of  
 the long ago in that beat us all. They are divided unto all  
 people under heaven. God wants no high sounding names—  
 no Pharisaic ambition. The wonderful works of Jesus were not  
 his most wonderful works. Nor were they anything in them-  
 selves, except as they were types for us. God wants us to raise  
 the dead, to cast out devils, to feed the hungry; God wants us  
 to be true to the trusts committed to us in life, wants us to have  
 calling in which we contemplate the real good of our fellow  
 men; and one legitimate calling is as good as another, mine no  
 better than yours. He wants me to know the truth, and preach  
 the truth, and practise the truth; wants us to know that mind  
 and soul are the gems of our being; wants us to get out of  
 ignorance, out of self, into knowledge and a higher life; wants  
 to have every grace, every virtue, without ever thinking we  
 have one grace or one virtue. If you can realize the responsi-  
 bility of life; if you can train your children; if you can unite  
 your household in bonds of love; if you can by example and  
 precept stimulate a noble ambition in those around you; if you  
 can mould another being into a Christian manhood or woman-  
 hood, you can do a good work. If you can be true and just in  
 your dealings, if you can pay your debts, if you can live  
 within your income and not be ashamed to do it, if you can be  
 pure and transparent in your life, if you can give only words of  
 sincerity to those whom you know despise you, if you can hear  
 every silly thing said to you in the name of politeness, and not  
 repeat those things back again, nor to anybody else, you can do  
 a very good work. If you can have a liberal public spirit, that  
 cares for your neighbour as for yourself; if you can build a  
 church to which you can bring the poor, and not for the sake  
 of something for you to glory in; if you can go to church your-

self to worship God, and not study your neighbour's  
you can do a very good work. If you can go out to v  
people who do not appreciate your work ; if you can  
to the worthless ; if you can give clothes to your en  
when you are reviled you revile not again ; if you can  
be told you are a fool, and half believe it ; if you can  
burdens and ills of life, the crosses and privations, with  
missive, an acquiescent mind ; if you can thank God for  
dealings with you ; if you can thank him for any us  
at whatever cost, you may accomplish ; if you can nes  
to him, and feel he is your father, then you can do  
work, then you can please him, and in his infinite  
reckoned with the angels in heaven. Do you ask me  
works will save you ? I tell you, no ! Jesus Christ sa  
and your works will tell you whether you are saved.  
see then how that by works a man is justified, and not  
only."

## THE IMPOTENCE OF THE LAW.

BY REV. WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD, D.D.

*For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did ;  
by the which we draw nigh unto God.*"—HEBREWS vii. 19.

It is the aim of the Epistle to the Hebrews to teach the insufficiency of the Jewish dispensation to save the human race from the wrath of God and the power of sin, and the all-sufficiency of the Gospel dispensation to do this. Hence the writer of this epistle endeavours, with special effort, to make Hebrews feel the weakness of their old and much esteemed religion, and to show them that the only benefit which God intended by its establishment was to point men to the perfect final religion of the Gospel. This he does by examining the parts of the old economy. In the first place, the sacrifices under the Mosaic law were not designed to extinguish the sense of guilt—"for it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin"—but were intended merely to awaken the sense of guilt, and thereby to lead the Jew to look for that mercy of God which, at a future day, was to be obtained in the sacrifice of his eternal Son. The Jewish rites, again, standing between the sinner and God, were unable to avert the Divine displeasure, for as sinners they were themselves exposed to it. They could only typify, and direct the guilty to the great High Priest, the Messiah, in whom God's mercy would shine in the fulness of time. Lastly,

the moral law, proclaimed amidst the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, had no power to secure obedience, but only a fearful power to produce the consciousness of disobedience, and of exposure to a death far more awful than that threatened against the man who should touch the burning mountain.

It was thus the design of God, by this legal and preparatory dispensation, to disclose to man his ruined and helpless condition, and his need of looking to him for everything that pertains to redemption. And he did it by so arranging the dispensation that the Jew might, as it were, make the trial and see if he could be his own redeemer. He instituted a long and burdensome round of observances, by means of which the Jew might, if possible, extinguish the remorse of his conscience, and produce the peace of God in his soul. God seems, by the sacrifices under the law, and the many and costly offerings which the Jew was commanded to bring into the temple of the Lord, to have virtually said to him, "Thou art guilty, and my wrath righteously abides within thy conscience; yet, do what thou canst to free thyself from it—free thyself from it if thou canst—bring an offering, and come before me. But when thou hast found that thy conscience still remains perturbed and unpacified, and thy heart still continues corrupt and sinful, then look away from thy agency and thy offering, to my clemency and my offering; trust not in these finite sacrifices of the lamb and the goat, but let them merely remind thee of the infinite sacrifice which in the fulness of time I will provide for the sin of the world, and thy peace shall be as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."

But the proud and legal spirit of the Jew blinded him, and he did not perceive the true meaning and intent of his national religion. He made it an end, instead of a mere means to an end. Hence it became a mechanical round of observances, kept up by custom, and eventually lost the power, which it had in the earlier and better ages of the Jewish commonwealth, of awakening the feeling of guilt and the sense of the need of a Redeemer. Thus, in the days of our Saviour's appearance upon

arth, the chosen guardians of this religion, which was led to make men humble and feel their personal ill-desert of mercy, had become self-satisfied and self-righteous. Religion designed to prompt the utterance of the greatest of prophets, "Woe is me! I am a man of unclean lips, and I am in the midst of a people of unclean lips;" now prompted the utterance of the Pharisee, "I thank thee that I am not as men are."

The Jew, in the times of our Saviour and his Apostles, had thus been mistaken the nature and purpose of the Old dispensation and hence was the most bitter opponent of the New. He was in the formal and ceremonial sacrifice of bulls and goats, and therefore, counted the blood of the Son of God an unholy thing.

He thought to appear before him, in whose sight the heavens are not clean, clothed in his own righteousness, and despised the righteousness of Christ. In reality, he was led to the justice of God, and, therefore, rejected the mercy of God.

This spirit is not confined to the Jew. It pervades the human race. Man is naturally a legalist. He desires to be justified by his own character and his own works, and reluctantly at the thought of being accepted upon the ground of another's merits. This Judaistic spirit is seen wherever there is one of the publican's feeling when he said, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." All confidence in personal virtue, appeals to civil integrity, all attendance upon the ordinances of the Christian religion without the exercise of the Christian's love and faith, is, in reality, an exhibition of that same unevangelic spirit which in its extreme form inflated the Pharisee, and led him to tithe mint, anise, and cummin. Man's formal rejection of the Son of God as suffering the just for the unjust, as the manifestation of the Divine clemency towards sinners, is a sign either that he is insensible of his guilt, or that, being somewhat conscious of it, he thinks to cancel it by his own works.

But, think and act as men may, the method of God in the

Gospel is the only method. Other foundation can no man lay than is laid; for it rests upon stubborn facts and inexorable principles. God knows that however anxiously a transgressor may strive to pacify his conscience, and prepare it for the judgment day, its deep remorse can be removed only by the blood of incarnate Deity; that however sedulously he may attempt to obey the law, he will utterly fail, unless he is inwardly renewed and strengthened by the Holy Ghost. He knows that mere bare law can make no sinner perfect again, but that only the bringing in of a "better hope" can, a hope by the which we draw nigh to God.

The text leads us to inquire: *Why cannot the moral law make fallen man perfect?* Or, in other words: "*Why cannot the ten commandments save a sinner?*"

That we may answer this question, we must first understand what is meant by a perfect man. It is one in whom there is no defect or fault of any kind—one, therefore, who has no perturbation in his conscience, and no sin in his heart. It is a man who is entirely at peace with himself and with God, and whose affections are in perfect conformity with the Divine law.

But fallen man, man as we find him universally, is characterized by both a remorseful conscience and an evil heart. His conscience distresses him, not indeed uniformly and constantly, but in the great emergencies of his life—in the hour of sickness, danger, death—and his heart is selfish and corrupt continually. He lacks perfection, therefore, in two particulars: first, in respect to acquittal at the bar of justice; and secondly, in respect to inward purity. That, therefore, which proposes to make him perfect again must quiet the sense of guilt upon valid grounds, and must produce a holy character. If the method fails in either of these two respects, it fails altogether in making a perfect man.

But how can the moral law, or the ceremonial law, or both united, produce within the human soul the cheerful, liberating sense of acquittal and reconciliation with God's justice? Why, the very function and office work of law, in all its forms, is to condemn and terrify the transgressor; how, then,

to calm and soothe him? Or, is there anything in the performance of duty, in the act of obeying law, that is adapted to produce this result, by taking away guilt? Suppose that a sinner could and should perform a perfectly holy act, would it give any relief to his anguished conscience, if he should offer it as an oblation to Eternal Justice for the sin that is past—if he should plead it as an offset for having killed a man? When we ourselves review the past, and see that we have not kept straight up to the present point in our lives, is the gnawing worm to be stopped by resolving to keep it, and actually keeping it from this point? Can such a use of the law as this is, the performance of good works, imaginary or real ones, imperfect or perfect ones, discharge the office of an atonement, and so make us perfect in the forum of conscience, and fill us with a peace and lasting sense of reconciliation with the offended majesty and justice of God? Plainly not. For there is nothing compensating; nothing cancelling, nothing of the nature of a satisfaction or justice, in the best obedience that was ever rendered to moral law by saint, angel, or seraph. Because the creature owes the law. He is obligated from the very first instant of his existence onward and evermore, to love God supremely, and to obey God perfectly in every act and element of his being. Therefore the perfectly obedient saint, angel, and seraph must each say: "I am an unprofitable servant, I have done only that which it was my duty to do; I can make no amends for past failures; I have done no work that is meritorious and atoning." Obedience to the law, then, by a creature, and still less by a sinner, can never atone for the sins that are past; can never make the guilty just; "in things pertaining to conscience." And if a man, in an indirect and roundabout manner, neglect the provisions of the gospel, neglect the oblation of Jesus Christ, and betake himself to the discharge of his own duty as a substitute therefor, he only finds that the flame burns hotter, and the fang of the law is sharper. If he look to the moral law in any form, and by any method, that he may get quit of his remorse and his fears of judgment, the feeling of unreconciliation with justice, and the



fearful looking for of judgment, is only made more vivid and deep. Whoever attempts the discharge of duties for the purpose of atoning for his sins takes a direct method of increasing the pains and perturbations which he seeks to remove. The more he thinks of law, and the more he endeavours to obey it for the purpose of purchasing the pardon of past transgression, the more wretched does he become. Look into the lacerated conscience of Martin Luther before he found the Cross; examine the anxiety and gloom of Chalmers before he saw the Lamb of God, for proof that this is so. These men, at first, were most earnest in their use of the law in order to reinstate themselves in right relations with God's justice. But the more they toiled in this direction, the less they succeeded. Burning with inward anguish, and with God's arrows sticking fast in him, shall the transgressor get relief from the attribute of Divine justice, and the qualities of law? Shall the ten commandments of Sinai, in any of their forms or uses, send a cooling and calming virtue through the hot conscience? With these kindling flashes in his guilt-stricken spirit, shall he run into the very identical fire that kindled them? Shall he try to quench them in that "Tophet which is ordained of old; which is made deep and large; the pile of which is fire and much wood, and the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it?" And yet such is, in reality, the attempt of every man who, upon being convicted in his conscience of guilt before God, endeavours to attain peace by resolutions to alter his course of conduct, and strenuous endeavours to obey the commands of God; in short, by relying upon the law, in any form, as a means of reconciliation. Such is the suicidal effort of every man who substitutes the law for the gospel, and expects to produce within himself the everlasting peace of God by anything short of the atonement of God.

Let us fix it, then, as a fact, that the feeling of culpability and unreconciliation can never be removed so long as we do not look entirely away from our own character and works to the mere pure mercy of God in the blood of Christ. The transgressor can never atone for crime by anything that he can

suffer, or anything that he can do. He can never establish a ground of justification, a reason why he should be forgiven, by his tears, or his prayers, or his acts. Neither the law, nor his attempts to obey the law, can re-instate him in his original relations to justice, and make him perfect again in respect to his conscience. The ten commandments can never silence his inward misgivings and his moral fears, for they are given for the very purpose of producing misgivings and causing fears. "The law worketh wrath." And if this truth and fact be clearly perceived, and boldly acknowledged to his own mind, it will cut him off from all these legal devices and attempts, and will shut him up to the Divine mercy and the Divine promise in Christ, where alone he is safe.

We have thus seen that one of the two things necessary in order that apostate man may become perfect again,—viz., the purification of his conscience,—cannot be obtained in and by the law, in any of its forms or uses. Let us now examine the other thing necessary in order to human perfection, and see what the law can do towards it.

The other requisite, in order that fallen man may become perfect again, is a holy heart and will. Can the moral law originate this? That we may rightly answer the question, let us remember that a holy will is one that keeps the law of God spontaneously, and that a perfect heart is one that sends forth holy affections and pure thoughts as naturally as the sinful heart sends forth unholy affections and impure thoughts. A holy will, like an evil will, is a wonderful and wonderfully potent power. It does not consist in an ability to make a few many separate resolutions of obedience to the divine law, but in being itself one great inclination and determination continually and mightily going forth. A holy will, therefore, is one that from its very nature and spontaneity seeks God, and the glory of God. It does not even need to make a specific resolution to obey, any more than an affectionate child needs to resolve to obey its father.

In like manner, a perfect and holy heart is a far more pro-

found and capacious thing than men who have never seriously tried to obtain it deem it to be. It does not consist in the possession of a few or many thoughts mixed with some sinful ones, or in having a few or many holy desires together with some corrupt ones. A perfect heart is one undivided agency, and does not produce, as the imperfectly sanctified heart of the Christian does, fruits of holiness and fruits of sin, holy thoughts and unholy thoughts. It is itself a root and centre of holiness, and nothing but goodness springs up from it. The angels of God are totally holy. Their wills are unceasingly going forth towards him with ease and delight; their hearts are unintermittently gushing out emotions of love, and feelings of adoration, and thoughts of reverence, and therefore the song that they sing is unceasing, and the smoke of their incense ascendeth for ever and ever.

Such is the holy will and the perfect heart which fallen man must obtain in order to be fit for heaven. To this complexion must he come at last. And now we ask: can the law generate all this excellence within the human soul? In order to answer this question we must consider the nature of law, and the manner of its operation. The law, as antithetic to the gospel, and as the word is employed in the text, is in its nature mandatory and minatory. It commands, and it threatens. This is the style of its operation. Can a perfect heart be originated in a sinner by these two methods? Does the stern behest, "Do this or die," secure his willing and joyful obedience? On the contrary, the very fact that the law of God comes up before him coupled thus with a threatening evinces that his aversion and hostility are most intense. As the Apostle says, "The law is not made for a righteous man; but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners." Were man, like the angels on high, sweetly obedient to the divine will, there would be no arming of law with terror, no proclamation of ten commandments amidst thunderings and lightnings. He would be a law unto himself, as all the heavenly host are,—the law working impulsively within him by its own exceeding lawfulness and beauty. The very fact that God, in the instance of

is compelled to emphasize the penalty along with the e,—to say, “Keep my commandments upon pain of eternal”—is proof conclusive that man is a rebel, and ely so.

I now what is the effect of this combination of command threatening upon the agent? Is he moulded by it? Does genially sway and incline him? On the contrary, is he excited to opposition by it? When the commandment es,” loaded down with menace and damnation, does not sin ve,” as the apostle affirms (Rom. vii. 9-12)? Arrest the ressor in the very act of disobedience, and ring in his ears Thou shalt not,” of the Decalogue, and does he find that v has the power to alter his inclination, to overcome his mind, and make him perfect in holiness? On the ry, the more you ply him with the stern command, and re you emphasize the awful threatening, the more do you him conscious of inward sin, and awaken his depravity. law,” as St. Paul affirms in a very remarkable text, e strength of sin” (1 Cor. xv. 56), instead of being its tion. Nay, he had not even known sin, but by the law : had not known lust, except the law had said, “Thou ot lust.” The commandment stimulates, instead of ex- ing, his hostility to the Divine government; and so long mere command, and the mere threat—which, as the hymu s, is all the law can do—are brought to bear, the ity of the rebellious heart becomes more and more at, and more and more intensified.

There is no more touching poem in all literature than that which the pensive and moral Schiller portrays the e of an ingenious youth who would find the source of purification in the moral law; who would seek the power n transform him, in the mere imperatives of his con- , and the mere strugglings and spasms of his own will.resents him as endeavouring earnestly and long to feel ce of obligation, and as toiling sedulously to school him- to virtue by the bare power, by the dead lift, of duty.

But the longer he tries, the more he loathes the restraints of law. Virtue, instead of growing lovely to him, becomes more and more severe, austere, and repellant. His life, as the Scripture phrases it, is "under law," and not under love. There is nothing spontaneous, nothing willing, nothing genial in his religion. He does not enjoy religion, but he endures religion. Conscience does not, in the least, renovate his will, but merely checks it, or goads it. He becomes wearied and worn, and conscious that after all his self-schooling he is the same creature at heart, in his disposition and affections, that he was at the commencement of the effort, he cries out, "Oh! Virtue, take back thy crown and let me sin." The tired and disgusted soul would once more do a spontaneous thing.

Was, then, that which is good made death unto this youth by a Divine arrangement? Is this the original and necessary relation which law sustains to the will and affections of an accountable creature? Must the pure and holy law of God, from the very nature of things, be a weariness and a curse? God forbid! But sin that it might appear sin, working death in the sinner by that which is good—that sin by the commandment might become, might be seen to be, exceeding sinful. The law is like a chemical test. It eats into sin enough to show what sin is, and there it stops. The lunar caustic bites into the dead flesh of the mortified limb, but there is no healing virtue in the lunar caustic. The moral law makes no inward alterations in a sinner. In its own distinctive and proper action upon the heart and will of an apostate being, it is fitted only to elicit and exasperate his existing enmity. It can, therefore, no more be a source of sanctification, than it can be of justification:

Of what use, then, is the law to a fallen man? some one will ask. Why is the commandment enunciated in the Scriptures, and why is the Christian ministry perpetually preaching it to men dead in trespasses and sins? If the law can subdue no man's obstinate will, and can renovate no man's corrupt heart—if it can make nothing perfect in human character—then, "*wherefore serveth the law?*" "*It was added because of*

transgressions," says the Apostle in answer to this very question (Galatians iii. 19). It is preached and forced home in order to detect sin, but not to remove it; to bring men to a consciousness of the evil of their hearts, but not to change their hearts. "For," continues the Apostle, "if there had been a law given which could have given life"—which could produce a transformation of character—"then verily righteousness should have been by the law." It is not because the stern and threatening commandment can impart spiritual vitality to the sinner, but because it can produce within him the keen, vivid sense of spiritual death, that it is enunciated in the Word of God, and proclaimed from the Christian pulpit. The Divine law is waved like a flashing sword before the eyes of man—not because it can make him alive, but because it can slay him, that he may then be made alive, not by the law, but by the Holy Ghost—by the breath that cometh from the four winds, and breathes on the slain.

It is easy to see, by a moment's reflection, that, from the nature of the case, the moral law cannot be a source of spiritual life and sanctification to a soul that has lost these. For law primarily supposes life, supposes an obedient inclination, and therefore does not produce it. It is not the function of any law to impart that moral force, that right disposition of the heart, by which its command is to be obeyed. The State, for example, enacts a law against murder, but this mere enactment does not, and cannot, produce a benevolent disposition in the citizens of the commonwealth in case they are destitute of it. How often do we hear the remark that it is impossible to legislate either morality or religion into the people. When the Supreme Governor first placed man under the obligations and sovereignty of law, he created him in his own image and likeness, endowing him with that holy heart and right inclination which obeys the law of God with ease and delight. God made man upright, and in this state he could and did keep the commands of God perfectly. If, therefore, by any subsequent action upon their part, mankind have gone out of the primary relationship in

which they stood to law, and have by their apostasy lost all holy sympathy with it, and all affectionate disposition to obey it, it only remains for the law, not to change along with them, but to continue immutably the same pure and righteous thing, and to say, "Obey perfectly, and thou shalt live; disobey in a single instance, and thou shalt die."

But the text teaches us, that although the law can make no sinful man perfect, either upon the side of justification or of sanctification, "the bringing in of a better *hope*" can. This hope is the evangelic hope—the yearning desire, and the humble trust—to be forgiven through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be sanctified by the indwelling power of the Holy Ghost. A simple, but a most powerful thing! Does the law, in its abrupt and terrible operation in my conscience, start out the feeling of guiltiness until I throb with anguish and moral fear? I hope, I trust, I ask, to be pardoned through the blood of the Eternal Son of God, my Redeemer. I will answer all these accusations of law and conscience, by pleading what my Lord has done.

Again, does the law search me, and probe me, and elicit me, and reveal me, until I would shrink out of the sight of God and of myself? I hope, I trust, I ask, to be made pure as the angels, spotless as the seraphim, by the transforming grace of the Holy Spirit. This confidence in Christ's person and work is the anchor—an anchor that was never yet wrenched from the clefts of the Rock of Ages, and never will be through the æons of æons. By this hope, which goes away from self, and goes away from the law, to Christ's oblation and the Holy Spirit's energy, we do indeed draw very nigh to God—"heart to heart, spirit to spirit, life to life."

1. The unfolding of this text of Scripture shows, in the first place, the importance of having a *distinct and discriminating conception of law, and especially of its proper function in reference to a sinful being*. Very much is gained when we understand precisely what the moral law, as taught in the Scriptures, and *written in our consciences*, can do, and cannot do, towards our

vation. It can do nothing positively and efficiently. It cannot extinguish a particle of our guilt, and it cannot purge away a particle of our corruption. Its operation is wholly negative and preparatory. It is merely a schoolmaster to conduct us to Christ. And the more definitely this truth and act is fixed in our minds, the more intelligently shall we proceed in our use of law and conscience.

2. In the second place, the unfolding of this text shows the importance of *using the law faithfully and fearlessly within its limits, and in accordance with its proper function*. It is frequently asked what the sinner shall do in the work of salvation. The answer is nigh thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart. Be continually applying the law of God to your personal character and conduct. Keep an active and a searching conscience within your sinful soul. Use the high, broad, and strict commandment of God as an instrumentality by which all cold and all indifference in sin shall be banished from the breast. Employ all this apparatus of torture, as perhaps it may seem to you in some sorrowful hours, and break up that moral drowsed lethargy which is ruining so many souls. And then cease this work the instant you have experimentally found out that the law reaches a limit beyond which it cannot go—that it forgives none of the sins which it detects, produces no change in the heart whose vileness it reveals, and makes no lost sinner perfect again. Having used the law legitimately, for purposes of illumination and conviction merely, leave it for ever as a source of justification and sanctification, and seek these in Christ's atonement, and the Holy Spirit's gracious operation in the heart. Then sin shall not have dominion over you; for you shall not be under law, but under grace. After that *faith* is in me, ye are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are then the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Galatians iii. 25, 26). How simple are the terms of salvation! But then they pre-  
 suppose this work of the law—this guilt-smitten conscience, and this wearying sense of bondage to sin. It is easy for a *first* soul to drink down the draught of cold water. Nothing



is simpler, nothing is more grateful to the sensations. But, suppose that the soul is satiated, and is not a thirsty one. Then, nothing is more forced and repelling than this same draught. So is it with the provisions of the gospel. Do we feel ourselves to be guilty beings; do we hunger, and do we thirst for the expiation of our sins? Then the blood of Christ is drink indeed, and his flesh is meat with emphasis. But are we at ease and self-contented? Then, nothing is more distasteful than the terms of salvation—Christ is a root out of dry ground. And so long as we remain in this unfeeling and torpid state, salvation is an utter impossibility. The seed of the gospel cannot germinate and grow upon a rock.

## GOOD WORKS.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

*see then that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."*—  
24.

NEVER should undertake to find any one doctrine in which all the essentials of salvation should be contained, have before him a task difficult indeed. The wants of man are many and varied. The variety and richness which we see in nature, with its seasons—with its myriad species of plants and animals—with its waters that reveal different colours, with its stars which shine in different lights, are an emblem of what may be expected in the spirit world; and hence, in any system of salvation that may spring up in the spiritual confines, we should be expected some such variety of action and of means as would harmonize with a varied soul and a varied world.

There was once a sect—and they have not all gone from the earth—who were called Solifidians, because they expected salvation because they believed Christ would bestow, or had bestowed, upon them that great boon. This sect had condensed the whole Bible into a single sentence, and all conduct into a single operation called belief, and hence their chief virtue must have been that of placid expectation. In hours of gratitude to the office of a Mediator, there often seems nothing in the sight of him and his cross. Comparatively, all else fades; and the reverie of the Christian is soon broken by the words,

“Why stand ye here idle?” “Blessed are the pure in heart,” and “Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only;” and in a moment he finds himself in the midst of a varied world, rich and beautiful as the tropics—a world in which faith in Christ is of vast moment, but does not lay waste the whole continent. The question how the mediatorial office of Christ may do all, if man must also do good works, is just such a question as is sprung upon us by the human will. How can God accomplish his will, and at the same time permit man to possess an independent, self-determining volition? I know of no method by which we can make works necessary or essential in a kingdom of perfect redemption or perfect forgiveness; but this difficulty we pass by, and, as in the case of the will, would cast ourselves upon the evident facts of Christianity and of common life; and the facts are that the Bible, from first to last, insists upon personal righteousness. Common life, or society, teaches us also that a salvation that did not insist upon virtue would be the destruction of society in all its temporal interests. If heaven could be sustained and peopled by faith without good works, earth at least could not; it would be compelled to resort to moral lives.

The doctrine of salvation by faith must therefore be so stated and held as to leave society its friend, trusting faith rather than fearing it, and must be so stated and held as to leave the other doctrines of Christianity some reason of existence. In their joy over the newly-discovered idea of salvation by the mediation of Christ, some of the divines around Luther, with Luther himself, declared that no amount of sin would imperil the soul that should possess this marvellous faith. Thus at one stroke the doctrines of regeneration, and repentance, and sanctification, and love to man, are cut down as cumberers of the ground. The Bible is reduced to one sentence; its grateful music is silenced into one note, to be sounded evermore upon a single string. This cannot be wondered at, however, for the tendency of zealous minds is always to narrow the universe, and make it all flow in *the channel* of their almost accidental thought or taste. There

are always those with whom some one doctrine has eclipsed all other truths of the Bible. The Second Adventists possess souls full of little except the immediate coming of the Lord. Hundreds of times have they stood in white robes awaiting for his coming in the clouds in great glory. Thus, all through the history of religion, the limitations of the individual, the atomic quality of the soul, has always revealed itself, in its selecting an atom only of God's vast truth. In religion we all verify the legend of Achilles, that, when an infant, having been placed in a room full of objects, he picked out a sword. Thus, his soul being only an atom, it was able to appreciate only an atom of the varied world. He passed by, as though they did not exist, the implements of art or industry—the emblems of music, poetry, eloquence, perhaps the ivory images of the gods—and drew forth the emblem of death and injustice. In that far-off age one of the wise men declared philosophy to be a study of death, thus telling us, not the whole truth, but that the clouds and solemnity of the grave had so impressed this one mind, that to him there was nothing worthy of profound logic except the last hour of human life. Thus, we all go down to the great truths of God as a child would go to a river bank, as if to empty it with its silver cup; but, after all our efforts, there flows onward the mighty stream, unconscious of the vain mortals upon the bank. Each individual is so much less than religion, so infinitely beneath his own Christianity, that we are bound to feel that after all his wanderings in its confines there will still be almost whole continents upon which his footstep has not been, whose flora has never greeted his eye, whose bird-song has never delighted his ear. It is in such a confession of the narrowness of individuals we can best find explanation of such an exaltation of "belief" over personal virtue as has been and is yet to be seen in many places, in many minds and hearts, and in many systems also, in the great Christian church. Many systems of doctrine are the work of individuals—places where some finite one has sat down to measure the infinite, and has supposed the universe to be all estimated and expressed when he had only been studying

his own mind and heart in the mirror of his innocent fancy. Then have come the councils to adopt this measurement, and then have followed hundreds of years in which all measuring rested, and in which all went daily and repeated the words of the individual whom they had adopted as monarch while living, and as saint when dead. Whether there will ever be a creed that will do justice to the Bible, one cannot venture to predict. The world is capable of making great progress, and it loves always the forward movement; hence no one can determine what may be the ultimate result of this capability and this longing; but up to our brilliant century all the estimates of Bible doctrine have come far short of conveying to mankind the lessons taught in the Holy Scriptures. The Arminian creeds fall short of expressing the divine side of the universe, while the Calvinistic creeds come short upon the human side; the Episcopacy has perhaps too much of the external, the Puritan too little; the old Baptist and Covenanter contained too much of perdition, the liberals too much of paradise; so that upon all sides the scene is as though we had all rushed forth to see the whole universe with our one sense of sight, or to take up an ocean in the hollow of our hand. It may be that, as the Bible contains the many sides of an infinite thought, the world will always be happy to drink of the stream, but will never be able to count its drops, or see all the smiling of its waves; and that it will be necessary for us, and for all who come after us, to hold our creeds in our hands indeed, and then to say of religion, as Newton said of the universe, "I have only gathered a few shells upon the beach." The religion of man will always be larger than any measuring soul.

This long discussion may now prepare us to hear the words of St. James, which so conflict with the Solifidian words of our creeds, and of the sacred Book, elsewhere in its pages. The conflict is, however, only among mortals; it is not in the book, if we confess the many-sidedness of the world of morals; but when men so define faith, or so rigidly as to eclipse human virtue, they create a fatal discord. When men come to a verse about

the Jew came to his bond, determined to have the flesh, Paul and James both may as well abandon the teaching truths to the children of men. Faith, indeed, is a soul, but faith then is not rigidly a belief; it is a friendship, for the word belief is often wholly and for whole pages the love for Christ reigns in its place. In St. John the word "love" quite excludes the word "belief." Faith, therefore, being a devotion to a leader, a mere nothing. A man is justified by his active affections, not by his acquiescence in some principle. Thus faith, in a mystical sense, is not a simple belief, but a mystical union with Christ, such that the works of the Master are the joy of the follower. Works, that is results—a new life—are the fruit of faith, the reason of its wonderful play of light upon the religious horizon. As man by his sin lost the image of God, by faith—that is, by devotion to Christ—he is by cross, forgiveness, and by conversion, rewards of his love, brought back to the lost holiness. Faith is not a simple coming to the Deity, for it is not God who needs human praise, but as it is man who needs virtue; and hence faith must be a oneness with Christ as shall cast the spirit more and more each day toward that uprightness called "works," which man has lost, but which only God loves. Hence James says, a man is not justified by what he may believe, but by a newness of inner life as may cast the soul into conformity with righteousness. Faith, as a belief and a friendship, good, so far as it bears the soul to this moral perfection. Perfection is the city to which faith is an open way, and the highway and gate; therefore, by the final works or fruits, a man is justified.

Finally, in senses more or less strict, look upon the Bible as the divine history and law of religion. It is the way of life. However Christian men may differ about the Bible, it speaks in the name of science, and tells how the earth was made, and when; yet when it comes to morals, there is no doubt that its pages are the record of God's will as to the life

and salvation of his children. Now, in that book throughout, the works of men play so profound a part that the verse of St. James seems only the reverberation of all the voices between the Genesis and the Apocalypse. The great word of the Old Testament was "righteousness." The "fear of the Lord" was the beginning of wisdom. "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." Nowhere in all that large volume of religious law and history is there any salvation alluded to apart from uprightness. That isolated "belief," which in some recent generations became a substitute for honesty and all morals, plays no part in the volume where Enoch "walked with God," and where it was the glory of David to be a man after God's own heart, and where the sublimity of Job's character lay in the fame he had won of being an upright man that "feared God and eschewed evil." In the glory cloud of that wonderful book the voice of God itself spoke forth and said, "He was perfect and upright." "There was none like him in the earth." He was "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame—a father to the poor." His philosophy was one of works. "Evil doers shall be cut off, but those that wait upon the Lord shall inherit the earth. Verily, there is a reward for the righteous." Thus all through the Old Testament there were voices of God enough to justify the words of James, and clothe them with an equal inspiration. In studying this life of Job, one of the Princeton divines seems to become enamoured of "good works" as opposed to belief alone, and says Job "is evidently portrayed as a model man." . . . "No account is made of ancestry, or of connection with the covenant people of God. There is no hint of his relationship to Abraham. He was plainly not one of his descendants." . . . "Evidently it is not outward associations or connections, though of the most sacred kind, that constitute the evidence and pledge of God's favour, but personal character and life. In every nation, and in every communion, he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him." This Princeton divine does not pause here. As though fearing he might still

giving only a doubtful sound, he proceeds to say, "The important question is not, Are you a Jew or a Gentile? Are you a member of this or that branch of God's visible church? or even, Are you a member of any outward body of professing Christians whatever? but, Have you personally that character which is acceptable to God, and are you leading a life that is pleasing in his sight?" These words are exceedingly valuable, not only because true, but because, coming from a great orthodox origin, they show that the heart of the most extreme champions of "faith" can no longer separate salvation from a life of honour as to God and man. Religion is conceded to be character. But does not this Princeton teacher, in the salvation of Job upon his sole relation to the coming Redeemer, apart from all personal character? I have shown in his judgment the important question is, "Have you that personal character which is acceptable to God?" Hence the "works" of St. James are a part inseparable of the great salvation. What the divine from whom we quote does say about "Redeemer" of Job is equally liberal and equally wonderful.

He says, "God was his Redeemer; Christ, who was in communion with God, and was God, is ours. When Job appeals to his Redeemer, he does so without even remotely apprehending that he (the Redeemer) is the second person of the Godhead; for, of the distinction of persons in the Divine Being, of the doctrine of the Trinity, as unfolded in the New Testament, he knew nothing." The inference from these words is certainly this: that the most devoted students of the Old and New Testaments do, in our day at least, perceive the overwhelming question to be, as Dr. Green says: "Have you that personal character which is acceptable to God?" It may be possible for all persons to see the Redeemer just alike in his relation to each soul, but in the midst of this conflict between man's works and the works of the Redeemer, the heart must cling to its personal holiness, as something about which there can be no doubt. In the Bible there may be some obscurity, arising from some minds the nature of the atonement, or



mediation, or substitution of one for another ; but in all the Bible there is no doubt left anywhere to hang over the doctrine that "the pure in heart only shall be blessed." Passing away from the old time and the land of Job, and coming to the absolute presence of Christ, we find him not informing Nicodemus that he must cherish a state of belief, but that "he must be born again." Paul is also eloquent over the "new man," the new spirit within. Hence, while the Redeemer, both of the old patriarch and of the latest Christian, may often be carrying forward his part of the great human salvation behind clouds, heavy or light—clouds which Job could not penetrate—and which hence mankind at large need not, the human side of salvation—namely, a new life and new works—lies always in a clear light ; clear whether viewed from the Bible or from the crying need of society. Society, at large and in the minute, from empire to fireside, demands a religion of good works. It would permit the man of Uz to sink his Christ in the idea of God, without separating the unity into its Trinity, but it dare not permit him to turn aside from being "eyes to the blind and feet to the lame." Society could not demand that he embody exactly so much in his hymn to his Redeemer, but it was compelled to beg him to omit nothing from his principle, "to fear God and eschew evil." This was the human side of salvation, and any shortcomings there would deeply injure all the sacred interests of State and home and heart.

We are informed that God so loved the world that he sent his Son, that whosoever believed in him should not perish, but have eternal life. This love, therefore, will not permit the world to suffer in personal goodness, by relying upon external righteousness. There is nothing society so much needs to-day as, not divine righteousness, but human righteousness. For want of this our nation mourns—our cities mourn—our churches are disgraced—our very homes are often made desolate. Our land has everything except righteousness. Did any continent of either old history or of fable—did even the *Atlantis* of Plato—or did the fabled northland of Hesiod, where

he people lived in sweet, open sunshine for a thousand years, never reveal such glory of learning, or invention, or art, or liberty, as our land proclaims in words that have escaped fable and have become clothed with reality? The people of the blessed nation described by Hesiod lived, indeed, a thousand years each, but not amid thought and education, but only in sunshine; not in a liberty of mind and soul, but only amid sweet spontaneous fruits; not near a temple of the Most High, but only in a land where the winds were sweet, and never rose in storm. Compared with such an empire of animal sense and ease, our nation, with only its three-score years for each citizen, and with its tombs and sorrows for all at last, is as the rancour of God compared with the smile of an infant in its first vague dream. But now, what is it that comes to mar this scene? What is it that makes the humble citizen and the statesman look upon both the present and the future with a sadness that almost at times makes them glad that there is a grave before them, which shall soon be to them an end of disappointed hope? There is one outlook that casts a shadow upon this great picture of human development; it is the outlook of unrighteousness. Could this land rise to a religion of "good works," the ancient dreamers might possess in peace their elysian world of perpetual sunshine, and fruits, and of thousand-year fe, for this nation, crowned with the additional charm of public and private honour, would surpass all the poetry of yesterday. Each morning paper, as the facts now are, is a history of mingled glory and shame, charity and avarice, kindness and cruelty, piety and vice. If, therefore, God so loved the world as to send his Son, he must have sent him, not to develop man's perversity, so much as man's uprightness, not to win from us the words only, "I believe," but also the words, "Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." The great need of the world being an honourable life, the God who "so loved it" must find in human virtue the chief arena of his love, and power, and grace.

In interpreting the Scriptures, all our wise men assure us that

the Old Testament was the shadow of the New. This we believe. But this fact commits us to the doctrine that if the Old Testament unfolded a human righteousness, that old honour must have been only a shadow of the piety and integrity to spring up in the Christian dispensation. If the New Testament is to be a place where "belief" is a substitute for a moral life, then the uprightness of Job was not a shadow of our better era; but the spectacle is reversed, and we are the waning evening of a day whose purer sunlight fell thousands of years ago in the land of Uz. But we believe in no such retrograde of doctrine. We believe the righteousness of the Old Testament only a shadow of the great unfolding of the human heart, destined to issue out of the Sermon of the Mount. If the old law said, "Thou shalt not kill," it sounded only the first note in the music of a love which would do to others what it would that others should do unto it. Indeed, the Gospel is a perfect overflow of justice, of honour, of kindness, of active love. Its prayer is that men may be perfect, as the Father in heaven is perfect, and the hymn that has risen up out of its divine morality is, "Nearer, my God, to thee." But this spiritual condition will not become universal, or even common, if the word "belief" is so magnified that the church cannot see the human "righteousness" in its supreme beauty. Pulpit and pew must confess the great breadth of religion, and not fix upon some one word and say, "I have found it," "I have found it," when they have only, face downward, drawn so near their own earth that all the other stars are eclipsed. That grand text which helped revolutionize the Christian world in the sixteenth century, "The just shall live by faith," having by its final word set us free from Romish error and despair, ought now by its initial word to help set us free from public and private neglect of a virtuous character. Saved from superstition, we at last need a salvation from vice. Religion is so broad, it demands the whole verse. Such a pyramid as Christianity cannot be founded on a simple word. *Who is it that lives by faith? The just! Oh, yes! The wicked, the dishonest, the cruel, cannot, it seems, live by a*

le belief! It is the just who thus live. It would seem, fore, that faith is some fountain out of which the human y is to draw a more perfect character each day, and their ur, and piety, and charity are not to draw life from man, rom faith in the living God. It is works through faith save. Now, the lessons from the text are these:—

) Never believe any one who comes to you with Christianity nsed into any one word, be that word ever so dear and so ble. Christianity is not in a single term.

) Always distrust any one who rigidly follows the letter of s word; for thus you will be plunged into a world of rd, and the Bible will lie at your feet a harp, broken, ly without music for the sad or happy hours of life.

) Take the Bible in its infinite scope, and look upon it as a erse which you may love, but cannot weigh and measure. n your will seems powerless over life and death, fly to the ie Will, which has no weakness, and which will do all s well. When your best works fail, and you feel their hlessness, fly to him whose cross stands between you and s wrath. Believe in Christ, and find peace. But when erceive your days to be without virtue, and without charity, without religion, read the words of James—that a man is fied by his works, and not by faith only; and let this mce be as the thunder of God's justice all through thy l heart. Oh, that this many-voiced religion might sound ue music all through our country, and give us men of love, of faith, men of hope, and men of virtue!

## DIVINE FRIENDSHIP.

By REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

*"A friend of publicans and sinners."*—LUKE vii. 34.

THERE are many pleasant relations which men sustain to each other in this world. Human lives meet and mingle, and are interwoven like threads in a texture of glossy richness and manifold colours, and never does human nature appear to better advantage than when seen in the light of its relations and connections. No one thread, no matter of what richness of colour, can rival the magnificence of the entire robe.

There, for instance, is the relation between parent and child, and it is regarded the world over with respect and reverence. There, too, is the relation of husband and wife, and when represented by harmony of taste and temperament between the two, you might not find a lovelier exhibition. The relations which exist between brothers and sisters, between the government and the citizen, between the church and its members—all these are pleasant to contemplate, and are productive of happiness and profit to man.

But there is one other relation man can sustain to man, which, as a spontaneous and self-created impulse of one soul for another soul, as an evidence of mutual likes and aspirations, and as a proof, in its higher exhibitions of itself, of constancy and unselfish benevolence, is inferior to no other. I refer to the relation

ch exists between all true friends—honest, sincere friend-

n the relation of parent and child, authority on the one hand obedience on the other, occupy the foreground. In man's tion to the government, material interests may preponderate. e is, by nature, selfish in its appropriation of its object— ing with a swifter and rougher tide. But in friendship, ner authority nor obedience, neither material considerations feverish excitement, enter as an inciting cause or result. It s from source to termination with a deep, even, and ever- ning current—a safe, a lovely, and a fruitful stream. No ks line its shores; no waves of passion beat mercilessly upon each; no corpses float along its current. Society owes to umanizing influence more than it can ever express, and God ds it with pleasure and complacency.

ow this is the relation which Christ is said to sustain to ind in our text. In the Bible he is presented to us in 7 aspects—as a Judge, a Saviour, a Councillor; as a Brother, het, Priest, and King—but in this passage he stands forth in ight and garb of a Friend.

rist as the Friend of man is, therefore, the theme of this urse.

do not intend to analyze friendship, and enumerate its ents. I will only suggest one or two of the more prominent. first of which is Constancy.

true friend is constant. Circumstances may change and y desert, but he remains the same. You yourself may ge. Sickness may sap your powers, misfortune make you port, and reduce you to despair. You may be corroded with rust of the world, but no lapse on your part can divert his pathy. Let but a cry escape your lips, and he will be at side. Let a blow be aimed at you, and his will be the l to throw it up. When other voices clamour to your edit, his will stem the torrent of abuse, and throw the ght of his reputation and advocacy into the scale of your ace.

Now, all this and much more can be said of Christ in his feelings toward every one. I say every one. I do not wish you to understand that Christ is a friend to the good and pure alone, if such there be; nor to those who are correct in their deportment—whose virtue walks into men's acknowledgment unquestioned. No; I launch the friendship of Christ out among you as men launch a life-boat among a struggling mass of drowning men, and there is not a hand beating the briny water, swarth or white, that may not seize it, and there is not a sinking soul that may not appropriate the friendship of the Lord.

Now, I suppose some of you have failed. Indeed, we have all failed! But I suppose that some of us have failed more than others. We have been tempted by others, and we have tempted ourselves. We have been pierced by arrows shot at us from a distance, and we have taken knives and opened our own veins. We have fought enemies without, and we have had a greater enemy within, and more than once have we been tempted to say: "It is of no use for me to try to be good. The more I try, the more I fail. I have forfeited my self-respect and God's love long ago. I will give it up."

My friend and brother, don't you give it up. While the Friend of publicans and sinners sits on the judgment-seat, you have no right to despair. Do not be discouraged. His friendship for you is the same—as fresh, as sincere, as strong—as it ever was. Your despondency is cowardly and wicked, and from the Devil. There is not another arrow in his full quiver with which the Adversary pierces so many souls to their death as despair. When a man desponds of being better, when a woman feels that the path to the throne is so steep that she never can climb it, then, if funeral-bells were ever tolled in heaven, might they swing their heaviest dirge. Such despair is utterly groundless, and the Tempter, even as he urges it home upon you, knows it. Doubt father and mother, doubt husband and wife, but never doubt the friendship of the Lord Jesus Christ for your soul. In the still watches of the night, when memory, remorse-

sy, will not let you sleep, out of the darkness shape a figure, and say to it. "Lord, remember me when thou in thy kingdom"; and in response, breaking the silence and the spell of your despair, shall sound is, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of d."

your soul wanders in darkness, which its own evil and deeds have spread over it; when you revolt at on, and imprison yourself in your own secrecy, go and of all your struggles and agonies, your failures and and thus roll the burden off at the foot of the cross.

the foot of the cross? Because there it was that his ll—the blood which came from his hands and head and l gushed from his spear-riven side, when he in his own ore the penalty of human sin, and made atonement to sgressed law—the blood which cleanseth whiter than soap, and washed in which your sins and mine, though as crimson, shall become as wool.

constancy and impartiality of Christ's friendship are what sus such a Saviour as he is. This is what makes him, d over, and in all ages, so near and dear to his followers; , too, it is, which lifts the Gospel plan of the atonement l philosophies and codes of ethics.

was a friend only to the good, or to us only in so far e good, what sort of a Saviour would he be? What on would the Gospels have to the race as a race? hy does very well to amuse, and perchance profit the

Ethics supply the virtuous with needed and salutary life. But what will you do with those who are neither : learned? What would the religion of Horticultural for the low and vicious,—for the ignorant by reason of and for the ignorant by reason of circumstance,—for hen, and those of us who feel that, if God is just and on the merits of a case, we stand guilty and con- before him? Is there not a craving in your nd mine for a personal Saviour, a living, breath-



ing, ever-constant friend; beside whom rules, maxims, and speculations are no more than dry and scentless rose-leaves are to our nostrils?

Now every life has its different moods and ranges of thought and phases of experience. We do not live on one dead level from cradle to grave; no, nor on the same level any one day through. It is marvellous what sharp changes, what sudden fluctuations, there may be in our experiences between the morning and evening of the same day. I have often thought that, in the character and changes of his life, man is as the sky, now all aflame with the uprising glory of some sun-like impulse, and anon black with clouds and full of tempestuous violence. And what we need is a Saviour who will be a Saviour to us at all times, and in every mood and temper. The friendship we need is a friendship which will be the same in its helpful and saving relations to us, whether we kneel at the altar, or stand white and haggard on the scaffold's edge.

This brings us to the second element we were to mention, namely, Sympathy.

Of all helps given of God, none is sweeter, more consoling, more strengthening, at times, than sympathy. There are seasons in life when it is to the soul what dew is to a parched and drooping flower. But sympathy is not open to all. It has limitations in its nature and exercise. In order to sympathise with a person, you must possess the power to understand and appreciate the moods and thoughts of that person. A coarse nature cannot interpret the trials and experiences of a refined one. A practical mind cannot sympathize with an imaginative one. There are ranges of feeling peculiarly individual, at least peculiar to a class of individuals; and the hopes, yearnings, and trials which one heart may feel, may be utterly unintelligible to another. Take birds as an illustration. They feed on different kinds of food: what one eats another rejects; what one recognizes as containing the elements its structure demands, the other turns from as *not belonging* to its order of diet. Each has its own peculiar

l of eating also. One will eat sitting on the limb of a  
nother floating on the surface of the water ; while a third  
the wing, searching the air for food, darting and wheel-  
his way and that, making the necessity of its lower  
zation minister to the exercise and amusement of its  
. So is it with men. There are many species in one  
ctual and moral genus. The moral nature of one feeds  
, another on that. One class of minds gets growth and  
th from what another class rejects as injurious. Thoughts  
arnings which are the daily food of one soul are fanciful,  
nd utterly incomprehensible to another.

ng to this diversity of taste in people, it is not always  
e to extend a healthful and grateful sympathy to one  
g it. For you do not understand, and therefore cannot  
iate, the weakness, temperament, and trials of the person  
sed. How often we encounter such cases ! Their  
rs baffle us, their sayings bewilder us ; we doubt the  
of their experiences, and deem their words flighty. But  
is power to understand and appreciate your words and  
s be given one,—one whom when you meet him you  
tively know and feel understands you ; to whom your  
are not vague and senseless ramblings of mind ; who can  
at your thought as a quick-witted person catches at a hint ;  
an put himself at your stand-point, and look at your life  
oubles for a moment through your eyes ; who, without  
felt them, understands your feelings ; who appreciates  
rrors and your virtues, sees your weak points and your  
ones ; who is able to interpret yourself to yourself, and  
dd to your inward knowledge ;—such a person, and such a  
alone, is able fully to sympathize with you. He under-  
you, and his knowledge is the medium through which he  
s his sympathy. Others may stand silent and powerless  
presence of your sorrow, but he is able to say the needed  
mforting word. Others may misjudge you, but he is  
to the right conclusion by his sure analysis. His presence  
urce of strength and moral inspiration to you. Around

him the wings of your better life escape the vacuum, and find an atmosphere which they can beat, and on which they can rise.

I cannot but think that it was this faculty to understand and appreciate the nature and need of every human heart, finding infinite expression in him, which so strongly and tenderly drew people toward Christ. He could sympathize with the publican because he saw in their true light the adverse social surroundings of the man, and the terrible strength of his temptations. Everybody seems to have been drawn to Christ. He magnetized people with the magnetism of his goodness. His character in its tenderness and completeness was a revelation. He was such to the fallen woman whom he saved from death at the hands of a brutal mob, and sent with tender exhortation from his presence. She had doubtless seen many good men, but never such a man as Christ. She had wickedly studied human nature on many sides, the better to practise her arts, perhaps; but here was a new revelation, and a phase of mercy she had never beheld. Over her swept the wave of a new and holy influence as he spoke to her. She felt for the first time that she was in the presence of one who knew her as she really was.

The very children loved Jesus. How could they help it? Do you think a perfect flower can command admiration, and the perfect Man of all the ages go unnoticed? Throngs followed him wherever he went across the country, listening eagerly to his every word, and passing it from lip to lip. What a pity every word, every syllable, that he uttered could not have been reported and preserved! What a pity that this sole, this unique Man of all the generations of men could not have been presented to us in his every phase of speech, his every shade of thought! We only know that in him was a wonderful charm, an inexpressible attractiveness. The Pharisees, it is true, hated him; but they hated him because they felt that he knew them, that he saw clearly through their hypocrisy and their cant.

Now I wish you all to feel, and to feel it in every drop of

our blood, that Christ as your friend sympathises with you at all times, and in all the moral conditions of your nature. Do not think that he sympathizes with you and loves you when in our best moods only; for if you should, you would wrong him utterly. A bird is no more surely noted by the Father of all when, glancing upward through the morning light, he pours his liquid notes upon the fragrant air, than when, stricken by cruelty or evil chance, he lies fluttering, a bunch of ruffled and lousy plumage, upon the dewy lawn. And so it is with us. Our souls are not known and noted of God the most when, bright and tuneful, they are lifted in ecstasy upward; but usually watched, and as tenderly loved are we when, stricken with hope and soiled in spirit, we lie groaning and stunned, our purposes broken, our virtue stained, our future dark and rebidding.

Why, think of it! Do we love our loved ones only when they are strong and healthy and prosperous? Or is there something in weakness and sickness and adversity which draws from us a fuller and deeper tide of feeling toward those who are dependent on us? Say, mothers, do you love your children less when they are sick? Do you, father, yearn over your boy less when he is rebellious? I know your answer. There is something in love which survives all changes of condition, which keeps its growth long after the gray veil, that no mortal hand may lift, has fallen over the face of the wearied sleeper. Do you think that you can show a higher type of character than Christ? Are our hearts warmer, is our love truer, is our friendship more enduring, than the heart and love and friendship of the Lord Jesus? Who can say it? Who can think it? But the peculiarity which most distinguishes friendship, and makes a friend so near and dear to us, is that it inspires one with the spirit of helpfulness. A friend means aid in time of need. In assistance cordially rendered he gives his feelings their proper expression. So essential and inherent is this sentiment to the very idea of friendship that you cannot conceive of the two being separated. You might as well attempt to con-

ceive of day without light, or a stream without a current, as to try to picture friendship uninspired with such a motive. A person who would stand and lift no hand to your assistance when assistance was needed, would forfeit in every one's estimation the title of friend. Not only at the moments of extreme necessity and peril, but also in the round of every-day life and experience, a friend serves you to the utmost of his power. When your ability is underrated, when your integrity is called in question, when your actions are misunderstood, and your words ignorantly or maliciously perverted, the voice and testimony of friendship are lifted in your defence. No person in business and professional life ever knows how many unselfishly and nobly are thus doing him service. No man knows how much the success of his life is owing to the strong current of approval started and continued in his favour by the unknown but efficient advocacy of his friends. Now and then it is given to one to ascertain the names and service of these friends; and many of you can bear witness that the names of those who spoke strong and brave words for you when strong and brave words were needed are never forgotten.

But it is unto Christ that you must look if you would see this the strongest and noblest element of friendship brought out in the clearest light. The friendship of Christ means assistance in the highest sense. He helps you by his guidance and consolation on earth, and he will help you by his powerful advocacy when you stand before God in heaven. I trust none of us have lived altogether in vain; that our lives have not been altogether wrong, and that many on earth, and not a few in heaven, have cause to bless us. But we have also wrought wickedness at times. Our own consciences, imperfectly educated as they are, accuse us of sin; and what we need, what every one of you need, is a divine, a constant, sympathetic, and capable friend to plead our cause for us at the bar of God. If any atonement has been made to the transgressed law, if any equivalent to deserved penalty has been offered to Divine justice, whereby the condemnation can be lifted from my soul,

lo I beseech that through the friendly offices of Christ it be set to my account. I trust my case, otherwise hopeless, in the hands of the great Advocate, and have hope that his merits will make good my ill-desert.

Ask you to note the class and moral character of the people from whom Christ was a friend. The text says that he was a friend of "publicans and sinners"—that is, of those who are morally all wrong; whose very name and office had become a word and synonym of wickedness and evil thinking and evil

The Saviour I preach, as moved by the spirit of sinners, and I trust of enlightened understanding, is a Saviour of men and women who are morally all out of the way. It is to you whose lives have been, as it were, a failure, whose natures, spiritually considered, are all in ruins, that Jesus comes in the form of friendly assistance. You stand, it may be, amid broken resolutions and overthrown resolutions and shivered hopes, and then the great builder up of prostrated virtue, comes to your aid, and, looking upon the ruin and waste which sin has made, upon crushed hopes and buried expectations, says to you, "Let us clear away this rubbish, and, working in harmony, your will with mine, side by side, we will raise out of the fragments a structure of which the heavens shall not be ashamed." It is astonishing how far a little human material can go in such an undertaking under the supervision of Christ. It is the spirit which pre-eminently characterises Christianity.

It is to the Gospel plan of salvation what the odour is to the flower—the most subtile and exquisite expression of it. The very chiefest reason why Christianity has a right to claim adherence is because she comes to you as a friend and helper. She goes up to a man, and says to him, "Here, you are having a hard time of it; let me help you." If he is blind, she says to him, "Give me your hand, I will lead and guide you." If disappointed, chafed, and despondent, she cries out to him, "Cheer up, friend, God never made such a man as you to despair." If suspicious, bitter, and cruel, she says to him, "Why do you make a devil of yourself? You were

not created to hate and hurt men, but to assist and bless them." If one is getting gross and heavy in his tendencies and tastes, if his mind is being polluted and his nature soiled, if appetite is getting the mastery over the reason, she plants herself squarely before him, and shouts, "Why do you make a brute of yourself? Are you not ashamed to go into the gutter with swine? Come, wash and be more cleanly, and live as one of your make should live." This is the way religion helps a man. It helps him as a pruning-knife in a skilful hand helps a tree—lopping off the dead, soggy branches, and pruning away the excrescences; not only so—it helps him affirmatively as well as negatively. Where a vice had grown, it inserts a virtue; where a thorn had protruded, a blossom appears. The man thus gains in a double sense. He loses what tends towards death, and gains what adds to the development of his higher life. Piety is expansion. It does not cramp and fetter the nature. It enlarges and liberalizes it; shoots it out in all manner of new activities, and widens it with a thousand generous impulses. A small mean man cannot represent Christianity, any more than a dwarf pear-tree can represent a forest. You must have some girth and altitude to you, if you would advertise religion. The church is not a treadmill, as some seem to regard it, where sad-featured men and women toil and tramp continually between set limits, longing to break loose and dash out, but are unable. It is a gymnasium rather, in which are vast appliances with which to exercise and develop the soul, and thereby add unto your nature a new vigour, a moral flexibility, a spiritual elasticity, in order that in the end (to continue the figure), when your grossness has been sweated off, and every power and faculty trained to the last degree of its capacity, you may be able, with death for your spring-board, to vault joyfully above the stars. The religion of Christ teaches a man that it is better to fly than to crawl, that virtue is sweeter than vice, that restraint is nobler than license, and that man, I care not how poor, weak, and erring he may be, may, by the grace of God, yet recover *himself*, and go to the grave with a hope in him that shall cause

the portals of it to glow like the illuminated gateway of a palace when the king returns from battle, preceded by news of a glorious victory.

Let no one dare to preach, under the name of religion, a set of dry, juiceless dogmas to this generation, when men long to hear the glad news of human progress and human redemption. Every chord of my nature harmonizes with this popular note. It is not theology, the science of God, so much as biology, the science of living, that I would impress. I would not, if I could, put any of you into the strait-jackets of the schools. A man must be a stunted stock, indeed, if he cannot grow so as to burst the lacings of any creed man ever devised. Creeds and formulas, as the main-springs of Christian activity, are of the past. They were born, undoubtedly, in part, of the Spirit of God, but also, in part, of the spirit of human bigotry and bitterness and ignorance. The banner over us, under which we are all marshalled, is not emblazoned with the name of Arminius, or Calvin, or Wesley, or Knox; but another name is on it, and the letters of fadeless light illuminate it from staff to border. It is the name by which God is known in heaven and on earth—Love. The creed of a church is good for nothing save as it aids the church to better express its life and purpose and faith in Jesus Christ, and its yearning sympathy for man. The life which is yet to be lived ere our Lord and King shall come with his holy angels, marching visibly through the heavens in long and majestic processions of power, will not be inspired by the past, but by the future—that future in which Jehovah yet veils himself, patiently biding the hour for the perfect manifestation of his presence. The present, which some hastily call the hour of noonday glory, will appear to the ages ahead, when, teeming with life, they shall look backward upon it, as the dawn and twilight period of the church. Many a throne is to be levelled, many a system of error broken into fragments, ere the one throne and the perfect system of truth shall have been erected and inaugurated. The time is to be when God shall pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, and “your



young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." Then shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, full-orbed, resplendent with unshorn beams, every ray fulfilling its ministry of healing, and the light of it illuminating the earth from pole to pole. I live my life as a man whom every passing day brings nearer and nearer to fuller manifestations of God's power, to clearer exhibitions of the Spirit's energy, to a wider diffusion of Christian dispositions among mankind. The white and the black, the learned and the ignorant, shall yet stand together, angelic in their disposition and works, hand linked in hand, wing enfolding wing, in the unity of long-lost but acknowledged brotherhood—the unity of perfect love. Draw, then, O men and women! your inspiration from the future. The air which drifts up from the past is heavy and dark with the mould and rank odour of ruins. Keep your faces turned fixedly and reverently ahead, and let the future, when the earth shall be full of the glory of the Lord, blow its perfumed breezes into your nostrils. Look, and behold the breaking through and scattering the mist of to-day, the effulgence which streams upon you from to-morrow.

As I draw nigh to the closing words, let me speak to you directly of Christ. Let me lift the cross of Calvary, for that is the symbol of Christ's friendship for you, and the sole emblem of our fadeless hope. I would point you to the blood that was shed for you. I would repeat the invitation and assurance of your ever-constant, ever-sympathetic, ever-helping Friend—"Come unto me, all ye who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." O woman! worn and bowed beneath sorrows your laughing youth could not foresee; O man! fretted and chafed, grimly enduring, yet longing for rest—and all you who stagger along your uneven paths, bearing up under failure and disappointment, and the load of your passions, with a bravery deserving a better cause and a better success, go and lay yourselves down under the shadow of the Rock. Lying there in humble dependence, the peace which passeth understanding shall descend upon you as the dews of summer distil

on the earth, and you shall see, as Jacob in his dream of old  
 saw, angels ascending and descending—going up with your  
 petitions, and returning with supplies for all your needs.

As one who simulates no feeling, who never yet exaggerated  
 anxiety to supply with a motive to act, who recognizes in the  
 liberty he claims for his own mind the fullest liberty on the  
 part of yours to decide, free from all outside pressure, this  
 position of your immortal condition—in such a spirit, I urge  
 you to no longer hesitate in what your reason and conscience  
 tell you is right. Make and speak now that needed and noble  
 resolution which at many times of your life you have been on  
 point of making, but foolishly postponed. March no longer  
 toward the grave as toward an enemy, but make your approach  
 to it as men journey toward the gateway of a palace, which,  
 though at infinite cost, they have inherited in the line of royal  
 succession.

Close with the thought that, through the appropriated  
 friendship of Christ, much which you have missed in this  
 mortal life will be made up to you beyond the grave. In the  
 life of heaven is included all lesser gifts. Loves we have lost  
 sorely missed, virtues we sought but might not attain, and  
 fulfilment of many a rudely interrupted dream, will greet  
 you there. At death we shall have the opportunity to make a  
 new start. We shall select and discard with a higher intel-  
 ligence than guides us here. Beyond the grave we may not  
 have the ordering of our lives, but we shall have great liberty  
 of choosing—even the liberty of the children of God. We shall  
 be linked with whatever is most kindred to us in fibre and  
 feeling, and streams widely apart on earth will converge in  
 heaven, and, mingling, flow in union under that nightless sky for  
 ever. Many a blunder will be corrected, and many a failure  
 will be made good there. I trust that through the friendship of  
 Christ, and our hearty acceptance of his assistance, it may  
 be that we shall meet in a temple not built by hands, and  
 engage in purer worship with a numberless multitude beyond  
 the skies, whose spaces, adorned of God, spread over our heads.

## THE GLORY TO BE REVEALED.

BY REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—ROMANS viii. 18.*

THIS chapter begins with the thought that within Christ's salvation we are freed from condemnation. This thought is there enlarged. The believer is considered as a being with a nature shattered and disordered, by its very impotence at variance with all well-being, but to whom a new element is imparted, within whom an element of life is implanted. This element has to struggle for its existence, has to be cultured by the believer in the use of grace and all the genial influences of God's Spirit. The struggle is in its nature radical, admitting of no compromises. To live after the flesh is to die, whether by mistake, by neglect, or by design. To have the spirit of Christ is alone to be alive. Being in this life of God's spirit, we are God's children, with Christ a joint-heir to an endless glory—an exaltation transcendent and eternal, compared with which the sufferings of this battle-day, brief at best, are not worthy to be considered. "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

All nature, from the simplest atom of matter up to the grandest spiritual being, seems to be constructed upon a basis of resisting forces. The sun stands in his place only by an *equilibrium* of the centrifugal and centripetal action. The

nothing would not pass from one cloud to another were there a want on one side as great as the overcharge on the other. passing, there would be no startling brilliance, were it not air resisted its action. All the steam in the boiler could not move even a locomotive, were it not that the friction of the wheels were greater than the locomotive's own weight. In the stable there could be no growth but by the absorption of one element and the radiation of another. Man can know no progress except as he is the subject of a moral resistance. Indeed, when we come to man we seem to have reached a point where all nature is on one side, and only man upon the other. Of all beings, man is born to struggle. He can even eat only as he labours. As for his body his best condition is one only of comparative vigour, and, consequently, of comparative happiness. He is weak and strong and secure only as he overcomes—only as he is nature's master. As you climb up into his moral and spiritual nature, his condition seems almost to become desperate. The highest being is often the farthest possible from the seeming to be. A little speck of time covers over the whole angle of eternity. "The glory which shall be revealed" seems nothing in the shadow of a "present" gratification. He asks, how can suffering be a road to bliss, or death the avenue to life? When you look back along the ages, you see the history and nature of every man in the history and nature of the human race. Man's first condition is very nearly a condition of ignorance absolute. He is ignorant of his own, as of all other nature. He is ignorant of his destiny, as of all the elements that control that destiny. While his infancy has to prepare him for a grand maturity, while mists have to be dispelled, and very slowly they seem to be. Often and often his progress seems hopeless. When his comparative maturity is attained, it is still only another stage of the same battle. What object stands most clearly out above all the haze and hill-top of human vicissitude? Not Persia, nor Rome, nor Athens, in their poetry, their power, or their philosophy; not Ephesus, nor Babylon, nor Thebes, with their splendour, their pleasure, or their hundred-gated grandeur; not Croesus,

nor Cæsar, nor Hannibal, with their wealth, their splendour, or their fame. No, man's whole history reaches its climax in a cross. By a death of all that is earthy there, man has a resurrection into all that is heavenly. And even then, the struggle only thickens. The cross not yet brings peace, but only a sword. All agencies of darkness, all elements of the old, past, dead nature, conspire to exterminate the germ of new life. Man catches a glimpse of a life by a death—of a glory in a cross; but the conquests of that cross, the glory to be revealed, the absolute defeat of the whole carnal nature, and perfect enthronement of the pure spiritual nature; man not yet sees. The majesty and force and tendency of his own struggle, he not fully comprehends. He does not know that God is love, and light, and all freedom—that he is a co-worker with God, and, therefore, a joint-heir with Christ.

∴ This struggle is in all things to which man sustains any relations, and man sustains relations to all existences. Of all things, man is created the nearest to nothing. In order to be anything, he must forego all mere appearance—he must sacrifice himself. This applies to man, take whichever side the moral scale he pleases. Many persons imagine that only religion—only pure moral culture—demands self-denial, self-sacrifice. To continue to be nothing is simply impossible. Every element of being is a good. Some men continue very near to nothing, and the great marvel to thinking beings is, how they can continue so indifferent, so insensible. Yet, however near, no man can be absolutely nothing. He must be upon one side of the moral zero or the other. Inaction itself will place him upon the side of wrong action. On either side the sacrifice begins, *a sacrifice begins*. Every man upon earth is sacrificing a half of being—his *well-being*, or his *ill-being*. That is the question with which nature confronts every man—which side of being he will sacrifice: will he grow the fruit, and cut up the thorn; or grow the tares, and sacrifice the wheat? There is vastly too much idle talk over this subject of good and evil. Some men speak as if all our *nature craved* only evil; as if God had thrown us into so lovely

and grand a world, only to deny his goodness and have no sympathy with him. Does not every fibre of our being abhor the evil? Why do men everywhere work harder in the prosecution of evil than other men do in the prosecution of goodness? Simply because "his servants we are to whom we obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." Tendency becomes fixed principle by the education we give it. Use is our second nature—in many cases, our whole nature. Take the man who does nothing in the great moral struggle. How can the cravings and impulses you feel within you be dormant in him? Where are the voices that breathe from earth and breathe from heaven? Where can his soul be that a great past, an infinite future, an endless universe all around him, stirs no longing within him? Chain you to his nothingness, and you would be as those who, in ancient times, were bound, while alive, to a dead and putrefying corpse. You would rather *not be* than *so be*. Take the mere worldling, the devotee of etiquette and fashion, the slave of society—what a study of the modes, what a lacing and racking of the body, what a conformity to the whims of others, and those others ten to one despised—what a sacrifice of time, and money, and even modesty to a few gew-gaws called dress—what untimely hours, night inverted into day and day into night—what mortifications and headaches and heartaches! Yet what resolution, perseverance, devotion! In the meantime where is simplicity, sincerity, individuality, independence? What becomes of usefulness, the service of man, the cultivation of all that grace which good men, angels, and God, all love—the very crown and joy of the moral and spiritual universe that, without which, there is no *glory*, in this world or in any other world? Is there no sacrifice, no self-denial? Who would endure the one-hundredth part of the costs for so worthless a prize?

Take the dissipated man—he has to face a wife and children neglected. He sits at midnight, when honest men are asleep, clutching his cup, bleared and bloated, parting with the last fraction which ought to have bought comforts for him and his.

Whether at home or abroad, he has lost his self-respect. The very objects care nothing for him. The time, and money, and pains he has spent in becoming degraded would have placed him high in usefulness and honour. Has he known nothing of sacrifice? Has he not had to struggle every day and every hour—struggle against every noble sentiment, every sacred duty, every manly emotion—to sink down to such a level? Take the criminal—while you are slumbering, he is braving the storm, baffling the smittings of the voices within him, exercising a high ingenuity and skill, spending much means in devising and perfecting implements—all only to rob you of your gains, and place himself in a dungeon. Is there no sacrifice? Can anything be attained without labour? And is not the labour of sin the hardest labour of all? Do we not literally groan, as Paul says, waiting for the adoption—the redemption of these bodies? Suppose men worked as hard for God—suppose we sat till the stars paled in the morning light, studying the divine things within us and beyond us—would we not know more than we do now? Suppose we could crush back the promptings of the heart for the sake of peace and truth and Christ, as the devotee of the world does for the sake of appearances and what he calls good manners, would there not be more peace upon earth and good will among men? Suppose we spent as much money for God and for man, as we spend upon these poor bodies for mammon, would not many palm-trees sprout, and springs of living water gush out, where now is only bald and dreary wilderness? Suppose God's people would apply all science for doing men good, as the counterfeiter and house-breaker do for doing men harm, would there not be far less need of jails, and more need of churches? How can it be that men have obtained the notion that only Christ's burden is heavy and his yoke uneasy? Is not the devil the most frightful of all things upon earth? and can any burden, by any possibility, be heavier than his? Men are working doubly harder, Christian, to be lost, than you and I are *to be saved*. Men are working doubly harder to curse and

crush this earth, than you and I are to save it. The agents of evil are all in earnest; the agents of righteousness are, half of us, asleep, and one-half of the remainder over on the side of the world. If we were as resolutely upon the side of God as evil men are upon the side of Satan, the time would come in which it could be said, man loves righteousness, as truly as it is now said, he loves darkness. If the church of Christ imposed upon us one-half the burdens the world imposes, it had been rooted out long ago as an intolerable task-master. And what a reflection for us, that the purer our faith has become, the clearer God has been revealed to us, the less exacting the church has been and is, so much the more we seem to lose sight of God's real work, and turn the world into a pleasure ground, and life into a holiday. Plain as the day, black as the night, stand the two sides of this great moral conflict. It has a history, it has a development. Enough of it has transpired to show a great design opening through it. God's glory, man's glory; God's glory through man's exaltation; man's glory in standing beside God and working together with him; man's glory in putting on Christ, in dying with him to all carnal and earthly nature, and rising with him out of that death to a glory unspeakable and eternal. As the unbeliever and sin-lover sacrifices his holy nature, his glorious future in that nature, so the believer and Christ-lover must sacrifice himself and his baser nature. As men have to exert themselves to excel in vanity and wickedness, so men must exert themselves to attain to holiness. If Satan has no drones in his hive, so God has no nothings in his heaven. God has so ordered the great struggle—so pitched the battle—that you express your individual being by the position you take in the great strife. To be on God's side, and do nothing, is to help Satan. "Who is not with me," says Christ, "is against me." Now, can you wonder at the success of sin—at the prevalence of evil—when we contemplate the lethargy of the churches? It cannot be said there is absolutely no attempt to do God's work; but in the attempt Satan knows there is no earnestness. He knows we do not mean anything. We do not



take hold with any resolution. We do not intend to make our sacrifice. We will go as far as it is easy to go, and we will go that far as easily as we can. One hour of patient labour in moulding a child-spirit on Sunday—one hour of real work for God on each and every day; one extra dollar for school tax, book tax, church tax, tax to take children out of their ignorance, men and women out of their squalor, to lift them up to purity of body, and purity of mind, and purity of soul—makes every nerve in us thrill with horror. Those great works of Christ, healing the blind and lame and sick, and raising the dead, and preaching the Gospel to the poor—grand, real as they were—were yet only shadows of a glory to be revealed. I most heartily believe he meant to tell us the time would come when this poor earth, this whole race, should be lifted up to perfect health, and perfect sight, and perfect hearing, and perfect life—when even the lowest stratum of this mortality should hear and feel and rejoice in the truth that God cares for it—should look ahead and realize that a “glory to be revealed” remained even for it. And Paul says, the creature itself—this human nature—shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. I can conceive of no millennium which is anything short of the enthronement of God’s whole law as it was in Christ—the physical obedient to and responsive to the mental, and both together obedient to and responsive to the spiritual. I cannot conceive that God’s kingdom has come until his will is done.

The real destiny of man is to overcome all nature without him and within him, according to God’s great first command, “Go out and subdue and replenish the earth.” Make nature your slave. Be a slave to nothing. Only serve one another and your God. Live in light, and air, and truth, and peace. Walk in knowledge and wisdom, the real thing among all the great realities around you. By what power were those miracles of Christ wrought? I am certain they were not by any violations of God’s laws. They tell us there were laws, and are laws, we know nothing about, which shall be revealed, dis-

Covered, the application of which by us shall put strength in human shoulders, quicken this whole frame, teach us how to grasp and apply nature, till there should be no more sickness, no more want, no more sorrow, no more spiritual death—till there should be new heavens and a new earth, a glory revealed.

He sent his disciples out to take up his work, to die even as he died. Their sufferings are the only measure of the degree to which they had drunk their master's spirit. Has the work stopped? Is the end of the Gospel met in us, and its work done when we bow our heads and say, "I believe"? Nay, it is then only begun. We have all lingered too long in the habit of imagining the whole cross and all heaven made exclusively for us, in imagining the whole object of our life to be simply to slip within the covering of that faith. Here is a garden God has put us in to dress it. From the very dawn of human existence man has been his brother's keeper. One of the fundamental clauses of the Christian's commission is—"You are the salt of the earth, the light of the world," made to shine, made for somebody's use. The saving the world, the mitigating the ills of life, the elevation of man in all his being, has through all ages been the measure of the church's life. The power in any man to live for others—to die for others—in other words, to live for Christ and die for Christ, is the measure of his worth, his development, his faith, his value to himself, to his age, to his race, to his God. The glory of which many of us conceive is impossible. The glory to be revealed is to be in us. We are to be worthy of the crown we wear, and of every gem in it. The power in any man to die is the gauge which will determine his place in God's grand world of all light, in the glory to be revealed. Not only is our whole nature to be developed—not only are we to study all God's laws, outside of us as well as inside of us—but there is a social law, an element in moral being, which binds us to one another, so that if we go up, somebody must go up with us. If nobody goes up with us—if nobody goes up by us—then we do not go up. Equality of blessing, equality in all blessing, is part of the glory to be

revealed. That equality shall be attained, 'not by invading a single right, but by the enthronement of all right. The power to die, if need be, in order to dispense blessing, shall be the power to be reckoned among the sons of God. If I have a thought, and do not impart it to you, I betray my own soul. If you can lift your brother, and do not lift him, you crush yourself. Can you see nothing of what it is to love your brother? It does not mean simply not to hate him. Can you see nothing of how to love is to fulfil all law? Can you see nothing of how the dying is the measure of your love? Does the cross tell us nothing of how God loved us all? He who knew all glory, to whom all glory was already revealed, conforms to his own law, and is "made perfect through suffering." We worship Jesus. We exalt and glorify him. Why? Because his very dying proves that only God could so love. The very verse which precedes our text says we are joint-heirs with Christ, if so be we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together. You see why Paul says so. There can be no glory where there is not the participation in the cross.

Now, brethren, let me ask, where are our sufferings in behalf of Christ? From what I have said, have you caught any glimpse of the glory to be revealed; the enthronement of all law, the banishment of all ignorance; no more wrong, no more unlove, no more sickness, no more moral and spiritual woe; this great and beautiful world thrown wide open for all God's children to enjoy, tears wiped away from all faces, sorrow and sighing fled away, all light and wisdom and knowledge and purity and love let in? That is what you mean when you pray, "Thy kingdom come," if you mean anything. Most people imagine that to join the church is no longer to have anything to do. Possibly the sufferings of our present time *are* worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. What is that glory to be? That glory is for him only who hath eyes to see. The curse of the wicked is, and shall be, they *see* no glory. Think! a great heritage for God's children, and *you and I* not in it! Think! as opposed to the glory, Christ spake of

the "outer darkness"—a darkness outside, beyond. Think of the millions in the past who have lived like sheep, or like wolves, and have died as sheep and wolves die. Think of the millions all around us who hear no voices, who see no glory, who never think of the cross—what can their condition be beyond the veil which God has drawn between two worlds? Can our place ever be with them? Where is it now? We Christians must wake to a higher life, to broader views, to a fuller measure of the spirit of Christ. There are infinite things of which our narrow philosophy dreams not. Shall God raise up another church to pass us by, as we were raised up and passed by the old Mosaic and Jewish church? It need not be. It appears as if written in characters of living light, that the church's mission is as much to men's bodies as to their souls, to their souls through their bodies—that religion is to fit us to live here as well as to live hereafter, to fit us for heaven by fitting us here on earth. Not that we are to make ourselves miserable—nay, but to make ourselves happy; not that we are to have no fine houses, no fine clothes, no rich enjoyments—nay, but that we are all to have finer houses, and finer clothes, and richer enjoyments; not for waste, not for pride, not for folly, but for man's happiness and God's glory, men are to be wiser.

To bring this about, somebody, you and I, must give brain and heart and hand, and time, bone and sinew, and muscle. Somebody, you and I, must give up houses and lands, and father and mother, and wife and children, yea, and even life also, not by hating them, but by not mistaking them, as we now do, for the sum and substance of life itself—by rising in them, through them, above them, to the glory to be revealed. This world wants (and it wants it because you and I want it) more of Christ, more of his work, more work like his, for body, for soul, for man; not that dogma and creed are not good enough of themselves, and, in the ages past, just what the world wanted, but that the time has come when the world must go on, as Paul told the Hebrews, "to perfection;" not laying over again the foundation of repentance from dead works. We now need a better ground in which to plant the hopeful seed. Man must

be lifted—physically, mentally, socially—and then we should also lift him morally and spiritually. Christ opened the blind boy's physical eyes, and that touched the seeing boy's spiritual heart.

Beloved, I ask again, where are our "sufferings"? Do we see the glory to be revealed? What a glory to have lived for Christ in any age! But what a glory to live for Christ in this age! What an inspiring prospect opens before the throbbing heart of the true believer! I do not wonder Paul worked and suffered as he did—he saw the day that now is dawning. What an inspiration is in these latter days for the young! You have time. You have health, and talent, and opportunity. Not a thing you know, not a thing you possess, not a hope that burns within you, but could now be consecrated, sanctified, and you through them be glorified. You have something, indeed, besides old habits and prejudices and a worn-out system to lay upon the altar of your love. A longing often possesses me to get back to my youth once more, so that I might take care of this body and this mind, train and develop both together, so that I might work better, and think better, and preach better, and do everything better; to know more of nature, more of man, more of Christ, so as in all work to work more wisely. It is too late for me. But, you young men and maidens, sons and daughters of the church of Christ, can you be insensible to the grandeur of your opportunity, to the voices all around you? Can you serve the world, and lose Christ? Can you sacrifice your better nature, and take no side with God? Put Christ's yoke on and wear it for him, boldly, resolutely, so that the world can see you mean something by it. Take up Christ's burden, and there will be strength in the shoulders, and breadth and majesty in your bearing, and a reward in glory. And who to-day will say he will have nothing to do with Christ, nothing to do with his work, no part or lot in the sufferings, no part or lot in the glory? I trust not one. A sacrifice you must make, a yoke you must wear. Choose whom you will serve. May we all stand with Christ in the sufferings of the "present time." May all stand with him in the glory which shall be revealed "in us."

## HOPE FOR THE FALLEN.

BY REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

*"And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."*—  
LUKE XXII. 31, 32.

SOONER or later every Christian passes through a sifting process—a process of temptation and trial, of failure and fall. The path which leads us to the beautiful gate is steep and rugged. No foot treads it far without faltering; no pilgrim treads the golden street with his sandals unworn; no head feels the blessed pressure of the crown which has not borne the prickings of the thorn.

The words of our text introduce to your attention a disciple of Christ, when standing upon the brink of a great temptation and greater fall. He was about to be put under a pressure of which he did not dream. That pressure was to be too severe for him. He was to do a deed which will stand to his shame and humiliation so long as the world endures. He was, as his Divine Master plainly said, about to be "sifted" by the adversary.

There are two thoughts in connection with this text. I wish to suggest two lessons which I would impress upon your minds

and hearts. The first is, the feeling of Christ toward Peter, and those who fall like Peter; the second is, the hope and duty of the fallen.

I would first, in order to expand the subject, call your attention to the clause, "I have prayed for thee."

You observe that the singular number of the pronoun is used.

Of all the disciples who were to be sifted, or brought under temptation, it was to Peter alone that his heart went out in urgent entreaty. But why for Peter rather than for the others? Why should the merciful feelings of his heart be concentrated on him? Was it because he was nearer and dearer, and more amiable than the others; more equitable in disposition, more exemplary and mild? No, for he was the reverse of this. Peter's eminence among the disciples at this time was not of this kind. He was hot-headed, rash, and egotistical, unstable and inconsistent. At one moment he was brave as a lion, heroic in all his impulses, and tense in all his purposes; the next he was timid, vacillating, and cowardly. You see him at one moment sword in hand, foremost to defend his master; the next he stands by the fire in the court-yard stamping and swearing, denying with oaths that he knew any such man as Jesus. But why should Christ pray for such a man? one is naturally led to inquire. Why did his love go out so warmly and tenderly toward one capable of so much treachery and falsehood, one so selfish and unreliable? Why select him from the other disciples, and lavish upon him so much tender solicitude and prayer?

Now, friends, learn what sort of a man Christ was, and what a moral phenomenon he was and is to the world. If you place your eye close to a hole in perforated paper, through an opening no larger than a pin's head you can see a landscape whose diameter is measured by miles, and whose limit is the limit of human vision. And so through this passage, when attentively considered, you will see how the nature of Christ unrolls itself; and the moral prospect the mind beholds is boundless and superlatively beautiful.

No, it was not because Peter was lovely and mild and con-

sistent, but because he was just the reverse of all this, that Jesus prayed for him. It was not because he was strong and well braced, but because he was weak and liable to fall, that he remembered him. It was not because he was consistent and grave, and above suspicion—such as would make a good candidate for the deaconship to-day—that his heart yearned towards him, but because he was unsteady and fickle and notoriously reckless. I wish you to observe here—for I know that it will comfort some of you—that the mercy of Christ abounds in the quality of discrimination. It adapts itself to man's needs, and flows according to the measure of those needs. I have heard it said that there is a law in nature by which the broken branch of the tree, and the bruised violet, and the wrenched shrub, and whatever else in the natural kingdom is maimed and hurt, draws the necessary elements of healing from the atmosphere; that the sun and wind and dew, the shadows that cool and the rays that warm, become physicians to it, and perform their free and unwearied ministries of love and healing. I have often thought how exactly this symbolized the nature of Christ and the operations of his love. Wherever you find a hurt or wound in the moral world, the healing influence of his love is drawn to it. Wherever you find a man wrenched and broken down in his hopes, wherever you find a woman fallen and crushed, wherever a soul unstable and reckless, wherever any throe and agony, any crying and wrestling, any struggling and downfall, there Christ is. In thought not a few reverse this law. They forget that the love of God in its benevolent operations increases by the ratio of our needs, and that the lower down we are, the stronger is the attraction which God centres upon us from above. At this point will doubtless occur to you all the cheering and infinitely tender words of Christ, when he said, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance"; and that other sentence, which carries with it the force of a demonstration—"The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."



Now, men differ in blood and temper, in taste and feeling, as widely as in the build of their bodies and in the look of their faces. Now and then you meet a man or woman made as the birds are, to fly and sing. In all their inclinations, in all their propensities and aspirations, they are feathered and plumed for flight. There is little virtue, relatively considered, in some men being noble and generous, and some women being pure and gentle, because it requires little effort on their part to be thus. They were biassed toward such things at birth. They were dowered in their cradles with such qualities by their parents. And what a heritage it was! And how low and mean does any legacy of stocks and money appear beside it! Know and remember that those parents who keep their bodies free from debasing appetites, and their minds uncontaminated by impure imaginations, shall, in bringing forth children like unto themselves, add beyond all other efforts of their lives to the bodily health and moral vigour of the world. I am fast coming to think that two-thirds of every generation are mortgaged to the Devil before they are born, and that it takes twenty years of care and education to unrivet the fetters which, by their own lack of control and dissolute lives, the parents fasten on their children.

But, as I was saying, people differ. To some, refinement is natural, and virtue easy. I have known women float through life as a white lily on a darkened stream—beings of beauty and fragrance, buoyed up so airily by the natural encasements of their virtue, that not a drop or stain might touch or soil the exquisite whiteness of their souls. But others I have known that were like a lily, anchored by a law of its birth in a current, and it was swayed from side to side, and buffeted, and not a moment was there in which it was not threatened with submersion. Men, too, I have known, who were like granite columns—shapely, ponderous, immovable. Neither wind nor rain—no, nor the converging pressures of many wicked influences—could move them an inch. But others there are like reeds and rushes, weak and willowy, who cannot stand alone, but must

stand in contact with and supported by many others, if they stand at all. Here is one that might seem almost a model, and you wish that all might be born like him. But anon you come across another, so weak, and mean, and effeminate, that you wonder how he came to be born at all. He is a miraculous reversion in an infinitesimal direction!

Times and seasons, also, make a vast difference with men in their moral relations.

Now, there are seasons when, morally and socially, our experiences are as warm, and genial, and equitable as weather in early June—when all our surroundings are fragrant, and the air breezy with good news—when everything seems to be shaped for our comfort and prosperity—when health and credit are good, all our enterprises well-timed and successful, all our investments yielding good returns, and old debtors, from whom we had expected nothing, astonish us by their honesty. Now, at such a time it is not difficult for a business-man to be good, any more than it is for a boy to sing or whistle when, with his shining-rod over his shoulder, he goes with great swinging strides down the hill toward the trout-brook. There is no temptation for him to shorten or neglect family prayers—to be gruff to his wife, or hard on his clerks—to drive his bargains to the very verge of dishonesty—to undermine his health by overwork, or commit suicide. When everything is prosperous and sunny, say, a business-man has no temptation to be dishonest and unchristian.

But wait awhile. The season changes. June gives place to December. The sky gets black and squally. The wind veers, and, instead of coming like a warm, perfumed breath out of the south, it is poured in gusts and currents out of the north, flecked with snow and dreary with sleet, which drenches the garments and chills through to the bone. Then comes the hour of weakness and trial. When credit sinks, and friends get suspicious, and investments yield nothing but loss, and the anxious brain carries its burden clean through the hours of sleep, and he rises unrefreshed, and failure stands not three days ahead of him—

this is the day and the hour when a business-man needs the assurance that, if there is sympathy for weakness in heaven, he has it. Many a man, as you know, has in such an hour closed his ledger with a groan, placed a pistol to his temples, and recklessly made for himself a blood-path out of his misfortunes or his shame. But I often think that the mercy of God is greater than some suppose, and that many a poor, harrassed, crazed merchant, whose name is stricken in disgrace from the book of earthly exchange, will find it entered in the Lamb's book of life, and live to glorify for ever the love which was greater than his guilt.

Now I want you to feel that the mercy of God is full of discrimination in the time and measure of its outgoing. It goes out most strongly to the Peters of the world, and in the hour of their greatest temptations. God never leaves those who are in alliance with him to fight their battles alone. Ahead of you are temptations many, and struggles not a few. You will descend more than once to the arena and the assault, more than once be tempted to desert and deny your Lord; but strengthen yourselves with the thought that the heavens are prayerful for you. The Saviour foresees, as he foresaw in the case of Peter, how you are to be tried, and remembers you in his prayer. The prayer of Christ is worth more to man than weapon of steel or armour of brass. One word of intercession from him avails beyond all our calling and crying. Yea, I could die mute and content, did I but know that my Saviour pleaded for me.

Now, as I have said, the future may be full of trial. There is nothing so black that it may not contain—nothing so venomous but that it may lie coiled in it, ready to strike and fang you. But, fellow-Christians, let none of these things disturb you. Out of the future, out of its possible darkness and disaster, sound the strong, cheerful words of Christ, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." And the saints ready for the coffin check their feet on the borders of the grave for a *moment*, and, looking back towards us, with their faces already

touched with the light of the eternal world, say, "Though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we will fear no evil; for God is with us, his rod and his staff they comfort us." The living and the dying share equally in the discrimination of his mercy. To the weakest shall come the most strength, to the rashest the most control, to the neediest the most provision, and to the guiltiest the freest and most abundant pardon.

Now you see that Christ takes an interest in each of his disciples, even down to the most unworthy. Take our churches, and examine them in their individual membership. In them, as among the twelve, all shades of temper and degrees of consecration are represented. Here is a man who adorns his profession, and here another who barely escapes being a disonour to Christ. Here a woman who, in the love of her children and the comforts of her home, finds all the security that earth affords, and the lively stimulus of a healthy pride. By her side, perhaps, sits another, torn we know not by what internal tumult wrought up day by day to an unnatural and ruinous excitement, and whirled around the circle of fashion so rapidly that more than once she has become dizzy, and spiritually lost her balance, and she feels that she is in danger of repeating that fall.

Now there is, as I suspect, a feeling in our churches which leads men to overlook one of Christ's most lovely and beautiful characteristics. I refer to his solicitude for the wandering sheep of his fold. The feeling I have alluded to is this—it is difficult to express it with precision, but I think I can give you my idea—the feeling, I say, is this, that the consistent Christians monopolize, as it were, the attention and favour of Christ, to the exclusion of the delinquents. It is not regarded as credible that backsliders—the cold, the sluggish, and the dissolute—are recipients of his favour. His pride and joy in the ninety and nine orderly, safely-housed, and well-behaved sheep, and not his anxiety for the wild, foolish, lost one, are, for the most part, the theme of thought and remark. And this unscriptural

and complacent sentiment grows and grows, until a division line is drawn between the main body of the membership and the backslider as sharp, as cruelly defined, and as difficult to pass, as if the poor man or woman had actually been excommunicated.

Now this is all wrong, and yet the mental revolt which many of you may detect in your minds against what I am saying is the best of all gauges to show you how deeply rooted this idea has grown to be in the average judgment of the church. The Johns who repose on his bosom, and not the poor, hot-headed Peters, who stand stamping and swearing in the market-places, are the ones we deem the objects of his pity.

The practical evils which come from this idea are these: it encourages spiritual pride and pharisaical complacency on the part of the majority of the church; it also substitutes another sentiment than that of love in our own hearts toward our backsliding brethren; and, lastly, it serves to plunge the delinquents themselves into a certain posture of antagonism to the church, and an inward despair touching their own ultimate betterment. This is the worst of all possible positions a man can get into. When the devil has threaded all the hope out of a man, he has not merely cheated God of the first harvest, but has destroyed the very seeds from which all future fruitfulness was to come. Now, if there is a single man or woman who is in or near the margin of such a state of mind, the lesson of this text is for him. He holds to the members of his church, more fortunate in temperament and training, the same relation that Peter held to the twelve, when the words of our text were first spoken. He is the object of Christ's prayer to-day. My brother, I do not know how often or how far you may have fallen. No one save God does know. I do not care for that. Never shall it be said that ten years of Christian life have left me worse than a Pharisee. It is not in my heart to cast a stone at you. What have I to do with stoning? Perhaps for twenty years you have been unfaithful to your covenant vows, been derelict in duty, loved money more than Christ, been

and vain, in all the plans and purposes of your heart  
idly, in your appetites carnal. I do not know but that,  
e you were last in a sanctuary, you have in act and word  
ied your Master, as did Peter, nor can I see upon the border  
that future denial your feet may even now be standing. I  
know, my brother and sister, that Christ singles out,  
all his disciples, you who are most tempted and most  
e to fall, and, going down to your side, and fixing his  
in love upon you, says, "I have prayed for thee, that  
faith fail not;" and all I ask of you is that you shall  
ember this, and go out girded and braced with the thought  
Christ has not cast you off because of your sins, and turned  
adrift, but that he sees all your weakness and liability to  
and has singled you out from us all, not in anger, not  
ject and thrust you away, but to assist and put his arms  
oving restraint around you, and will so continue to do  
our dying day. The words of Paul are true—as true  
as ever, as true to the modern church as to the  
ch at Rome; and you should all be persuaded that neither  
nor death, nor things present, nor things to come, nor  
hing that can happen to you, can separate you from  
s love.

is is the anchor, the hope, to which I ask you to weld your  
. So rivet yourself to it that, when the next gale bears  
upon you, you will not be driven out of the harbour of  
refuge—out of your confidence in Christ's redeeming blood,  
tossed and buffeted amid conflicting doubts and fears, but  
old stoutly to your trust, as a ship is held to its anchorage  
the anchor is struck into the cleft of a riven rock. There  
t ahead of you a hand's-breadth of sky which is not of  
son, typical of a fair to-morrow, so long as in your heart  
a single regret for sin, and a deep, warm desire to be better;  
out of that tinted, roseate sky come words of encouragement,  
igns of promise, and unspoken messages, and ministrations  
ve and hope. And not only so, but that sky deepens and  
tens its hue as it slopes downward; and at death, when

Satan shall gather all his terrors, God will gather all his consolations, and that hour which so many paint with blackness shall be as radiant to the believer as golden mist. And all this I urge you to believe, not with wishing and a vague hope, but with the firm assurance of faith.

I would now call your attention to the last clause of the text: "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

Now, if there is any class of men from whom the church popularly does not expect strength, it is pre-eminently from that class known as "backsliders." If the mercy of God was like the charity of men, who of us would find forgiveness? If a professing Christian trips and falls, although it be far less in extent than the lapse of Peter, it is all over with him, so far as popular estimation goes. No matter how useful he may have been. He may have preached the gospel, and laboured with good results, for twenty years; but if, caught off his guard for a moment, he is overpowered by the Adversary, and falls—farewell to his usefulness. "*You* strengthen the brethren, indeed! Has it not been proved that you were intoxicated, that you were picked up drunk in the street, and lost your church by it? You are a likely person to preach righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come!" Or again: "*You* exhort or pray again in public! Did you not forge a cheque? were you not tried for it, and barely escaped the prison? and did not your church excommunicate you for it? I would like to know what good your words and prayers would do!"

My friends, that is the way that the world, and the church, too, talks about men who have fallen; but it is a wretchedly sad way of talking, after all. If Peter had been a modern Christian, very slight chance indeed would have been his after that exhibition of himself in the court-yard. And yet there was a vast deal of noble, self-denying, soul-saving work in Peter after his terrible lapse from his Master, as you all know; for the Scriptures bear witness to it, and heaven is full of the testimony and praise of it. And this Christ saw, for he laid a solemn charge upon him in these words, "When thou art

converted, strengthen thy brethren." In saying this, the Saviour enunciated one of the greatest principles known to the student of moral forces. The principle is this—that all instruction and warning in spiritual matters must be based on knowledge and experience.

If I had a stretch of rapids to run, and could select from a dozen guides, I would choose that one who, when he last went down that terrible reach of water, at the point of the wildest whirl and loudest roar had his canoe twisted from the pressure of his paddle, sucked from under him, and crushed to fragments on the rocky bottom. And the reason would be, that he who once barely escaped death, when next he neared that point would approach with his senses all alert, and know to the width of an inch where to steer, and drive his flying shell straight to the proper point. And so it is on that other river which we call life, and along those portions of it where the current is swift and full of eddies, the decline steep, and the suction strong. He who has passed down such a passage, and been morally near wreck, is the man to caution and strengthen me for the danger. No one can talk to young men, for instance, concerning the woe of drunkenness, like the reformed drunkard. Who can tell you of the horror of fire as he who comes staggering out of a burning building with his hands blistered, his hair burnt to the scalp, and the skin of his face puffed and white with the inflammation of the heat and steam? When that man talks about the torment of fire, you look at his face, and see that he knows what fire is. Why, I might advocate temperance, and you would listen respectfully, as becomes you, and that would be all. My words would make no great impression, start no new conviction, nor move any such emotion of pity or fear as you are capable of feeling. But let me place a man before you who has been a drunkard, a city sot for ten years, and yet whom you would remember as an active and prosperous business man years ago, a kind husband, a good citizen, and an upright gentleman. If I could place such a man before you just as I found him in the street, ill-clothed, tremulous and weak, would you not listen?



As you saw his pale, haggard countenance, seamed and marred with the traces of debauch—his eyes, out of which hunger and despair looked; the shaking of his hand as he stretched it out toward you; the broken-down condition of the whole man—and out of his quivering lips heard the words: “I had a happy wife once, but my cruelty killed her; I had wealth, as some of you know, but rum took it from me; I had a home in that long-gone day, but the sheriff sold it over my head; I had hope once, both as to this world and the world to come, but the light of it has faded, for my days are passing in disgrace, and I know that no drunkard can inherit the kingdom of heaven!”—and then heard him declare the truth extorted from him by his agony, “The wine cup has done all this for me: beware of the wine cup!” would you not be moved, seeing this man, hearing his words of warning? Would not the virtue of these young men be strengthened against the accursed drinking customs of the day? Well, this law holds good to a greater or less extent through all grades of experience, and none might be so useful to society and the church as those who have fallen, and by their falling gained the right and power to address intelligent counsel and warning to others.

God lays a mission, therefore, on all of you who by sad experience know the weakness of your own natures, and the readiness of God to forgive. It is to you who are wise with the knowledge of your weakness that I speak; to you who are in that unfortunate condition of mind in which a professor thinks that his past unfaithfulness cuts him off from any future attempts of usefulness, that I address the exhortation of the text. I know not where you worship. My arrow is drawn at a venture, winged only by the Spirit of God. But this makes no difference with my feelings or with our relations. Let your past be as a wild and frightful dream that comes in the night, and torments us with its visions of terror, but departs with the rising of the sun. Forget your past. Your repentance has covered and changed it. Behold! see for yourselves! its scarlet has become like wool, and its crimson white as snow! Do not think that

you are counted out of the moral influences of your church by its pastor? If he be a true under-shepherd of Christ, he lays on you the injunction that was laid upon Peter. There is not a summation he makes of the powers and forces to be organised in the future for Christ and man in which you, your wealth, your time, your friendship, your influence, your example, are not counted. So far as your past has been wasted, you are to remedy it, and so live hereafter as to strengthen the brethren.

Why, see the philosophy of this thing. Suppose fifty men, who had lapsed from the perfect fulfilment of their covenant duties, and have been adding little to the moral forces of their respective localities, should say, not all at once, perhaps, not in so many words, but in heart and act, "I have not been doing my duty to the church, no, nor to my own soul either, and I will change my course, rectify my example, and henceforth, God helping me, will be faithful to my pledge"—would not that strengthen the brethren? Who can estimate the power of such a stand, the addition which such a confession and reconsecration would bring to the spiritual forces there? And the farther the man had wandered, the more marked his failure in the past—the more noticeable and influential for good would be his return to duty.

Return, then, return, all ye who have wandered! Come back, ye prodigals, smitten with spiritual famine, to your Father's love and home!

## Vintage Gleanings from the American Pulpit.

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WE do not say to a person of diseased sight, come out and look at the noon-day sun, and thus shall you be cured of your infirmity; but we provide the coloured glass, the dim light of the tallow taper, and by medicinal art, and mechanical appliances, strengthen the eye that it may look straight at the sun; and thus it is with the dim, the blurred, and the enfeebled, spiritual sight of the human brother. The supernal splendour of a direct vision of God would only dazzle his sight, and not illuminate his soul. It is only on stepping-stones of means and helps, that the soul, darkened by vice and crime, can rise into a fulness of knowledge and communion with God. If we give to our erring brother a vision of the divine in the human, knowledge of the seen inspires faith in the Unseen.

SOME time since, while riding over the hills of a neighbouring town, I saw the stream that wound its way below, touched by the sunset glories; and never till then did I know all its coursings and graceful curves, for then it burned away off into bays, and threads, and quiet meanderings not obvious in the light of noon-day. So exactly it is when the life of friends whose presence had blessed and cheered us is seen in its sunset glory. In their personal presence we are not conscious of all that they are and all that they have been to us. But death transfigures the whole life, and unlocks all the wards of memory and all the treasures of love—the lessons which were forgotten burn out anew; the counsels unheeded take on a tone more searching and tender; pleadings to virtue and persuasives to duty, which may have become blurred by time, or may have been passed unheeded by, start up along all the past like angel voices, and come down along all its avenues like the echoes of a spirit world.

me," said Herder, in the weariness of his last illness, "I thought, that I may quicken myself with it." At such times when everything else is fading and passing from us, it is unspeakable, to have within the soul itself a great joy which cannot fade or pass away. So, in all the great moments of life, in the highest transport of success, or amid the trials, like autumn winds, shake off the leaves that were the glory and defence of our prosperous summer days, it is a joy in the soul some great thought which may draw us into the sanctuary of our being, where the agitating successes or sorrows of life cannot come.

In the natural world, we perceive that the Creator has prepared a golden bed, into which, every evening, the sun sinks. Now the classics did love to speak of this dreamy, golden

But God loves the human heart more than he loves the world. Hence, the Saviour came. St. John points out to us the horizon where the soul goes down. And when our loved ones who have loved God die, when a humble child or a noble statesman, when beautiful youth, or venerable man bids farewell to earth, and our tears fall upon their dust, we should best in John's Gospel and dream the golden couch receives into its peace these stars sinking down from the sky in this life.

The religious truth, the highest religious truth, lies close by the surface if we will only pluck it. As it is in nature, so it is in the realm of the great truths are on the surface. They are not for the few only. It would be preposterous, would it not, to suppose that God gave a revelation to man bearing upon his highest destiny, and then made it so that only scholars and learned men could comprehend it—something we must shovel up with our dictionaries and lexicons, delving into ecclesiastical history to get at the great saving truth of the Gospel? The great truths of the Gospel are not below the surface. The trouble is, that the Gospel is too simple for most people. Let us remember to forget that the greatest things are the simplest things.

As in the ripened fruit every shower that fell upon it, every hour of sunshine, every night that folded it round, and every ingredient in the soil beneath, entered into its texture and helped to make it what it is in the harvest, so with us every incident of life, the passions we indulged, the actions we performed, the hopes we cherished, the privileges we improved or left unimproved, have entered into the very texture of our souls, and helped to prepare or leave us unprepared for the harvest. Then shall be gathered, in its matured results, all the experience of our past lives. Every kind and charitable deed that we have done, every pang of contrition that we have felt, every sincere and earnest effort in behalf of what is good, every prayer that we have uttered from the heart, every longing after holiness and God, every unselfish affection that we have cherished and obeyed, every sorrow that has helped to soften our hearts, subdue all selfish ambition, and draw us towards heaven, every sickness and pain meekly endured, every secret sighing of the soul for deliverance and life, every acceptance of God's mercy, and every act of obedience to him—not one of them all is lost, but all, as they are written down in the book of God's remembrance, so shall they be gathered in, the only treasures we can carry with us there.

ONE sentence from him who lived in the bosom of the Father, and who was filled and animated by his spirit, and yearning with tenderness towards us, is a dearer and truer expression of God's love than all that we can know besides. It cherishes in us a more loving faith. It makes prayer more an act of vital intercourse with God. It makes us more than children of God. It opens within us a holier and diviner life. It throws the refining and endearing sanctities of heaven round our human affections. It removes our friendships from the sphere of perishable relations, and makes them sacred and immortal. Beneath the shelter of God's love it brings us into union with him, and fills the atmosphere around with the melodious harmony of a peace which the world can neither give nor take away.

## PERFECTION IN RELIGION.

BY REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."—MATTHEW v. 46, 47, 48.*

THIS is part of our Lord's Sermon upon the Mount. This sermon is as remarkable for what it implies as for what it expresses. Underneath the whole of it there is a great foundation of law and logic. If you dig down to the base of any one of these precepts, you come to a common-sense—a naturalness, a direct, practical essence, which tells you there is nothing artificial about it—nothing that is conjectural or problematic, but the whole of it a perfect counterpart to life as we find it—a something we want in our every-day existence—a something responsive to our whole being, mortal and immortal. This is a peculiarity attaching to all the discourses of Christ. There is not a particle of rhetoric in any one of them. There is not a line of what is ordinarily called eloquence. There is an infinite interval between Christ and all other men. Paul is grand, but there is in him the smack of the schools at Jerusalem. He is human, and his model is artificial. So it is with all other men. From them we gather extracts for declamation. But we can declaim nothing from Christ. Every utterance of his is a

thought. It goes down into the soul. It tells you something and asks you something. The thinker cannot trifle with it, and the trifler cannot approach it. It admits of no discussion except as light and science admit of discussion—discussion to learn about it, to find out all there is in it. There are no topics like those which convened the Apostolic College, whether we shall eat meat offered to idols, whether we shall be circumcised, things of merely temporary interest, and of very little consequence, things of interest and consequence at all, only by reason of our weakness, and not of our strength. The whole sphere of Christ is in the essential and eternal. It is life giving life. It is the living clothing the living. Christ differs from others as the laws of vegetation differ from trees. Other men differ from each other, as one tree differs from another tree. Christ can give life in all climes to all trees. Man is for ever only cramping the real life to his notions of shape, and that according to his own particular clime.

Underneath this Sermon on the Mount there lie some vital questions and broad assertions. What is religion? Is it a thing variable in kind, or only in degree? It is necessarily connected with what men call religious systems. This human body is dislocated. Its limbs are broken. Its parts are diseased. Its eyes are blind. Its ears are deaf. Its nerves are paralyzed. A leprosy covers it from the crown of its head to the soles of its feet, and the worst of the disease is, like the opium eater, it loves the trance into which it has fallen. The music of nature, the beauty of life, the riches of providence, are almost lost. Man knows not how to respond to them, how to enjoy them. That is what makes him lost. He is lost to his better nature, lost to a higher nature all around him—lost to God. The object of all religious systems is the restoration of the race to light and wisdom, health and peace. If there is no restoration in the system called religious, then there is no religion in it. Religion is health coursing once more through these withered limbs—opening the deaf ear, quickening the sightless eyes, restoring the flesh of the leper as flesh of a little child.

There is infinite instruction in that act of Christ, when he performed those wonderful works before the eyes of John's disciples, and bid them go and tell John what things they had seen and heard—not the least of which was that “to the poor the Gospel was preached.” That act was typical. The cure must extend to the patient's deepest disease. Health must reach the part most affected, or the patient is in no sense cured. Restoration is the thing wanted. Whatever restores is the application needed. A system may paint the happiest prospects before us; it may clothe us in the most elegant and fanciful drapery; it may lay us upon the softest bed: but what if the patient is no better—what is the use of your system?

These are some of the questions Christ asks us. Then he asserts it has been a fatal error among men to love their systems much more than the patient, to labour to get him to understand the system, as if the knowledge of a theory could do the work of an internal life-producing agency. We have taken his pulse in our hand, and told him it beat too fast or too slow; explained to him why it was so; given him the science of the schools; but we have not made him any better. Mark the force of that repetition: “Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time.” We have all heard that. The ears of every generation have heard it. Many generations have heard nothing else. A knowledge of how poison works cannot poison us. A knowledge of how medicine acts cannot cure us. All human knowledge is, moreover, defective. There is no theory upon earth that is co-extensive with mortal disease. Every system of religion must be, like all other systems, progressive. Even if what the fathers believed and practised were in a measure right—right up to their time and their degree of development; if what they taught were an advance upon the teaching of other ages, that is no reason why we should cling to them for ever. It is rather a reason why we should do as they set us example—advance upon them as they advanced upon their fathers. They acted up to the best light they had—that was wisdom. If you have more light than they, and act only up to where they were, that is un-



wisdom. Their wisdom was not in their theory, but in their action up to their theory—that theory the best their times afforded. If you ask whether the laws of morality change, so that a thing may be wrong to-day which was right yesterday, I would say, no, the laws do not; but our degrees of knowledge respecting the laws change the conditions under which those laws act—are constantly changing. The prime law of wisdom is, that a man shall act up to the purest light within him. The degree of light is constantly changing. Experience is ceaselessly teaching. No matter how the human race learns; if it learns, it is bound to practise. The Mosaic law was a grand advance upon the no-law that previously existed. The law of Christ was a grand advance upon the Mosaic, and the laws for God's children in heaven are in advance of these precious laws in this Sermon on the Mount, far as we are yet from knowing all there is there. And there is nothing contradictory in this. The equations of algebra do not contradict the laws of simple addition. But he who understands algebra will the better understand addition. Algebra reveals thoughts respecting simple addition, which he who understands simple addition merely does not possess. All the religious systems before Christ were preventive. They were negative—tending to check. That characterizes all human systems. You find man constantly endeavouring to throw around his brother fetters and leading strings. The instructions of Christ are positive, permissive, aggressive, bidding man seek the best. If man finds out, *e.g.*, that polygamy is wrong; if it is in conflict with high, social ends; if it is destructive of that culture and purity without which society cannot be truly exalted, then its existence, under the Mosaic dispensation, could be no excuse for our retaining it under ours. If we should discover, to a demonstration, that capital punishment did more harm than good; that it defeated the very ends of humanity it was originally intended to promote, then nothing could excuse our unwisdom in retaining it. We know by experience, both in its existence and in its ceasing to exist, that polygamy was an evil. Under the Mosaic system, it was tolerated as an evil pre-

ferable to that absolute lawlessness, culminating in idolatrous grossness, characteristic of other nations. If we should abolish capital punishment, and there were something in the inherent nature of human society demanding it, then evil would ensue upon its removal, and we should be equally bound to return to it. In this way there is a difference between things permitted and things commanded. The Decalogue will stand for ever. Try it whichever way you will, it is law. There is an inherent fitness in it with all other things. And yet the Decalogue is only partial—"Thou shalt do no murder." That is all very well, but even that is only what thou shalt not do. It is permitted us to go beyond, and if we know that, we are commanded to go beyond. We must love our enemy; not only not murder him, but do him all the good we can. And so while the moral law does not change, the conditions under which that law acts do change. A thing may be wrong to-day which was not wrong yesterday. But yesterday that thing was not the best that might have been. It was not the absolute right, only the approximate right, and we would have been better off yesterday if we had known better.

You see how natural are these laws of Christ, and yet what a revelation they are at the same time. I have said the archangels have higher laws than these laws of Christ. Perhaps that is hardly conceivable. They have the same laws, but they have developments of those laws not yet perceived by us, and they wonder, when they look at us in our blindness, that we see so little of all there is in Christ. They have attained a transcendent excellence, yet still in the presence of God they veil their faces. God wants us to attain an excellence like theirs. The yearning of God toward humanity is the yearning of a father's heart toward his prodigal and afflicted offspring. It was love that impelled God to send his son. To the end that we might attain divine excellence Christ Jesus came. This object Christ Jesus preached—the uplifting of our spirits, of our whole being, by obedience to moral law. "You are my disciples, if you do whatsoever I command you." This

excellence is religion. To produce it is the object of all religious systems. Have what religious systems we may, if we have not this we are a sounding brass. If you love those only that love you, the publicans can do as much. You are no better than they. Self-culture is your mission. Be ye, therefore, perfect, even as your Father "in heaven is perfect."

This was the preaching of Christ. This reformation of our lives is the one doctrine characteristic of Christ. Only towards the last of his mission did he touch upon the great laws underlying all moral action, and then he only touched them. It was just before he was separated from his disciples, he said, "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." Often have we wondered what those things were. If the world could not bear them then, can it bear them yet? If Christ could not reveal them, can mortal ingenuity discover them? In religion, as in all other departments of human economy, there is a science as well as an art, *i.e.*, there is a system of laws independent of man, on which man must base his action—a part God has done, and which works, whether man understands it or not. It has been but recently that man knew anything of nature. He knows very little now. But nature has always responded to our wants just the same. It has always rained so that the springs should be full, and man should have water to quench his thirst and strengthen his body. We know how heat causes the air to carry up the moisture little by little till it returns to us again in refreshing rain. But our knowledge does not make it rain the more. It does not make water the more refreshing. We are the better off for our knowledge, because it is sweet to understand God. But it rains upon heathen lands as upon ours. The barbarian finds a refreshment as well as we, and the one law of essential interest to us is, not that which produces the rain, but that we drink. So there are laws of religion, laws of Christ's atonement, laws working in us and for us, but unknown to us; we cannot bear them now. Christ did not come to reveal them all to us. Into some of them the angels desire to look. One object of Christ's coming was to fulfil those

laws, to do something for us which by those laws was needful. Then he wanted to show us how to live, so that we might attain eventually a knowledge of them—how to drink at the eternal fountain, so as to be made alive. He desired us to do God's will, that we might know of the doctrine. Knowledge would be after obedience, or never. Obedience is wisdom; knowledge is the fruit of wisdom. The tree must be first, and the fruit afterwards. Where the tree is not, no fruit can be. The test of wisdom is the absolute life. You observe the ground-swell, the principle underlying this sermon, the betterness, the purer, the higher being. The wisdom of this is proved again by its harmony with existing facts. The wise life is the one thing wanted by the individual, and the one thing essential to the well-being of the whole social body—the one thing essential to well-being, whether in this world or any world. When a thing is true, all other truths tend to confirm it. Wisdom is sustained by all things else, and thus the wisdom of Christ is transcendent. Can the church be wiser than Christ? Has the church followed Christ's example? What mean the philosophies and dogmas and isms that are preached in the world? Do we preach the Gospel as Christ preached it, or do we define what Christ did not define, and preach our definitions instead? If we are not the dead merely going forth to bury the dead, if we have not one to preach Paul, and another to preach Apollos, and another to preach Cephas; how is it that it takes so many to do what a few could do as well? If we all have Christ to preach, how is it there is so little Christianity?

This leads to the whole question of preaching. What is preaching the Gospel? What is the Gospel to be preached? We talk much of preaching Christ: what is it to preach Christ? Do I preach Christ when I preach about Christ? If so, do I preach Paul when I preach about Paul, or Jerusalem when I preach about Jerusalem? Did Christ preach himself? When he sent men out to preach, he commanded them to preach repentance and the kingdom of heaven; in other words, that men be wise, in order that they might enter the kingdom of heaven.

That is what Christ himself preached. Is it preaching Christ to tell you what Augustin preached, or what the Thirty-nine Articles contain? Is it preaching Christ to tell you, you belong to a church which knows what is true? Christ did not preach *about* things, but he preached certain things themselves. He preached that without the practice of wisdom there could be no salvation. If you that are saved are just like those that are unsaved, then what reward have ye—*i.e.*, what is your salvation worth? If you have no virtue and no grace, no purity, no excellence, no releasement from sense and time—nothing more than the worldly have—what is the use of your religion? If you are selfish, and of no more use—if the world is lifted no higher than it would be if you were a worldling—then how is it, are you the better off for your Christianity? You are not perfect, and the whole object of all religion is, that you might be. Heaven is rest and blessedness because there is nothing to make unrest and unblessedness. Earth will be rest and blessedness in proportion as you are above publicans and sinners. That is preaching something definite, something practical. It is preaching virtue and self-control, and self-culture and heavenliness, that you be such a power, such a living vitalized and vitalizing agent. Did Christ preach the Gospel? Did he intend to set us an example of preaching? Do we preach him when we preach what he preached? Does not the world need it to-day as much as it ever needed it? When men looked at Christ, when we look at him, we see glad tidings in him. Is it intended man should be like him? How blessed! He was a Gospel. Does it so happen with the church? Is she a Gospel? At the first she was a Gospel. But very shortly she left off preaching what Christ preached, and being what Christ was, and took to explaining abstract laws, and to preach that she was commissioned to preach. She left the art or practice of being, and took to the *science* or theory of being. The consequence was that the *elements* which were in the world became dominant in the *church*. The church became distinguished from the world

only by being more intensely worldly. And there she is to this day. And the world seems to react upon us with the question of the Master. If ye love them that love you, why the publicans can do as well, and where is your perfection? If the world's irreligion is as good as your religion, then how are we better than they? I ask again, what is it to preach Christ? Do I preach Swedenborg, when in his name my doctrine is Swedenborgian? Do I preach Plato, when in his name my doctrine is Platonic? Do I preach Christ, when in his name my doctrine is Christian? What is it, then, to preach Christ? Is it to dwell in pathetic utterances upon the whole scene of the incarnation? Then why not, as the church once did, make the scene more vivid by scenic representation? Why not, as men do still, have crosses and altar-cloths, and ritualistic celebrations? Do those who have the most of these become the most unworldly, or only the most unearthly and unheavenly? Is it to preach our varied philosophies or unphilosophies which we cannot exactly prove nor disprove, and which proved or disproved matter practically very little one way or the other? Is it not plain, that to preach the Gospel is to preach what Christ Jesus preached; that men might again be what Christ Jesus was, son of the Highest: as he said himself, children of your Father in heaven, perfect as he is perfect; light to this world, salt to this earth?

And, if only such a Gospel should be preached in our day, would it not make as much of a stir as the preaching of Christ Jesus did in his day? I seat myself with that crowd there upon the Judæan Mount, and see the folds of Christ's thought settling like an icy mist around them. Have you ever reflected how wonderfully little those discourses of Christ affected, burning as they must have come from those lips whose very utterances, one would suppose, were conviction? Or have you thought what sort of a stir it was the preaching of Christ Jesus made? You may easily imagine. Suppose he were here to-day, and should say to you, you have heard from them of old time; you have been told by the apostolic succession that

if you are baptized, and join the church, and say your prayers, and live as you list, and lead a life of no particular value to you or anybody else, then you are a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven; but I tell you nay, unless you repent you can never see the Kingdom of God. You must perish for ever. You are possibly a little further from the Kingdom of God, because you are confirmed in a mistake. God is worshipped in deed and in truth—that is, in life action and in humble sincerity. You have heard it said, this is the place where men ought to worship; but your lives show you are idolaters. You brought your gods here with you in your hearts, and about your persons. They were made with hands, and came across the ocean. Your Gospel is not mine, but was issued in Paris, and you are obeying it to the letter. Every day you live for that, because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling sound with their feet. Therefore, the Lord will smite the daughters of Zion, and will take away their tinkling ornaments, and their nets, and veils, and bracelets, and ornaments for the legs, and head-bands, and rings, and jewels, and many changes of apparel, and crimping-pins, and fine linen; and it shall come to pass, instead of perfumery, shall be offensiveness; and, instead of well-set hair, baldness; instead of a stomacher, a girding of sack-cloth. In other words, instead of your being Christians, and contributing to make the world beautiful in holiness, in simplicity, you are only helping it to revolve in folly, and all the consequences of folly, poverty, vice, and woe; instead of a Saviour, you are helping on the world outside in its wretchedness and death. If you do as the worldlings do, how are ye better than they? Not that gold or apparel is in itself wrong, but when the soul passes into anything material, it passes into a grave. It is this which keeps the world envying, and *striving*, and drudging, and cheating, and sinning, and we are *not lifting* ourselves out of it, not redeeming ourselves, and *therefore not blessing* this world. Your adorning ought not to

be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel; but the hidden man of the heart, that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is, in the sight of God, of great price. Suppose he should say, you are pretending to lay up treasure in heaven, but you are mistaken. Your whole life is one death struggle to lay up treasure upon earth. You do not know yourself, nor eternal things, nor what real treasure is. You do not suffer your little children to come to me. You train them for the world; puff them with the vanity of earth, and set their affections upon things below. You are seeking pearls, but not heart, and mind, and soul—the pearls of unspeakable price. Great thoughts, and beautiful facts, and endless knowledge are everywhere, only unknown to you. You are afraid of thought, and court amusement, while you shun the true amusement, the joys of angels. You want to help to save the world, and offer a sacrifice to God; but precious souls are all around you trodden under foot, sunk into bitter degradation; but you put forth no hand to rescue. Vice crieth in the street, and luxury and ease respond from the church. The poor way-faring brother is robbed and half dead in the pit, and you, the priest and Levite, are passing by on the other side. I say unto you that you have left no houses, nor lands, nor sister, nor brother, nor wife, nor children, for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake, and so you cannot have the true blessing of the life that now is, nor that in the world to come, life everlasting. You are no peculiar people, zealous of good works. You are no light of the world, no salt of the earth—not good and profitable unto men. You are not saved—i.e., saved out of anything that is evil, saved into anything that is particularly good—therefore, not saved at all. You would begin to think he was a strange man. You would think that kind of preaching was very discouraging, and you may imagine how those poor Jews heard him. You would not know he was the Saviour, the Son of God. You would look upon him as an *ignorant man*, and not worth minding, and so you would not reflect upon what he said, but go away prejudiced, and the worse for



your hearing. You would prove that your religion were a mere sentiment, and not religion. You would do just as these people did, think he ought to be arrested and persecuted, and driven from society, and think when you had gotten rid of him you had, of necessity, gotten all that was wise, and good, and true. But, beloved, is it not time for such a gospel to be preached again? Do we not all need it? A commotion it would make, but ought not a commotion to be made? Does not this world to-day bitterly want just the virtues Christ preached?—simplicity, sincerity, unselfishness, usefulness, purity, modesty, separation from the world—something not hollow and sentimental, not living in conventionals, artificials, and externals—something not all name, something to which the poor can come, and the ignorant and helpless, and feel they have a friend? Is it not time religion were become practical? If we compare ourselves with the publicans and sinners, where would we draw the line; or, if God had to draw the line, would he draw any line at all? Is there any perfection in you or me which makes us the children of God? Have we learned anything of Christ? Has that unspeakable sacrifice that he made in that incarnation availed to bring you or me nearer to the Kingdom of God?

Brethren, do you see any reasons why Christ drew a line between believers and the publicans? Have you any higher idea of wisdom—of your life-work? *That there is need of a positive self-examination and real resolution and communion with God, in order to be the children of the Highest? Who saves his own soul blesses a world, for he is a light across the pathway of others.* Is there any additional inkling of what heaven is, and of how you are to be heavenly? Let me exhort you to be more real, more in earnest, to find your soul and bring it to Christ, and make it like him, to be his disciple in sincerity and truth. He is truly a disciple who does as Christ commands. He only buildeth his house on a rock who heareth these sayings of his and doeth them.

## THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD.

By REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

*"Preach the Word."*—2 TIMOTHY iv. 2.

NOTHING is more evident than this—that the death of Christ neither wrought any change in the feelings of God toward the sinner, nor in the feelings of the sinner toward God. Whatever the atonement did effect, whatever use it served, it certainly did not modify the relative status of either. From the beginning God had loved man with an infinite love. To that there could not come, by any occurrence, addition. From the fall of our first parents through all their successive generations, their moral alienation and antagonism remained, and after Christ had wrought out and finished his great work on earth and re-ascended into heaven, human nature remained in all its old state of lapse and degeneracy.

From the start there had been two obstacles to man's salvation. The first was that which the just and holy claim of the transgressed law presented. God must ever remain harmonious with himself. He cannot favour one attribute at the expense of another. His justice must be satisfied before mercy can be exercised. In the divine economy the death of Christ sufficed to meet the demand of the law. It was a perfect satisfaction to justice. In its legal connection it was held as a full and ample equivalent of the punishment of the sinner. Divine justice was honoured, and, without discordance to himself, God

could allow the sentiment of his mercy exercise. After the death of Christ God could justify the unjust, and yet remain just to himself. Thus the first great obstacle to man's salvation was removed. But no sooner was the first obstacle removed than the second presented itself, namely, how might the enmity of the human heart to the plan of salvation itself be removed? The death of Christ opened, if I might so express it, a broad, macadamized road along which the feet of men might pass, without let or hindrance of justice, heavenward; and the cross, planted as a guide and sign at the entrance of it, sent out its impressive and perpetual exhortation to all to enter; but none would enter. A road, I say, was opened; a path, wide and smooth, rising with easy grade upward, lay before the race; a highway, at infinite cost, had been cast up, along which the nations in long and happy procession might tread; when—surprising fatuity!—a discovery was made: the nations would not walk in it! An astonishing and persistent disinclination to be saved on the part of the imperilled revealed itself. The avenue remained untraversed by the very ones for whose benefit it had been opened. The possibility of freedom had no sooner been proclaimed to those in spiritual slavery than it was discovered that, instead of appreciating the privilege, instead of eagerly availing themselves of the chance of liberty and restoration, they absolutely preferred their bondage. They gazed with unlighted eyes at the cross, which was the sign and seal of the government's love and care for them, and heard the proclamation of hope and redemption from their chains without one emotion of gratitude, and even with ignorant and defiant murmurs. What was to be done? Leave them to toil and die in this base condition, or educate them up to an appreciation of their privileges? You anticipate the answer. God never despairs, never halts in his merciful undertakings. In the flow of his love lie the infinite resources of cleansing. No pollution discourages him. He is to sin what the sun is to darkness—its master by inherent composition of forces. The second obstacle in the way of men's salvation—their disinclination to be saved—did not appal him.

He proceeded at once to devise and set in operation means for its removal. He commissioned agents, and organized agencies; the object of all their influence was to overcome the sinner's disinclination to be saved. In this we find the origin and motive of the ministry of the word.

By the ministry of the Word I do not, of course, mean that part of it alone expressed by the preacher, but all those enlightening, convincing, and convicting influences which flow from the history and revelation of God's dealings with man. This book is, indeed, the source and head of the Christian ministry and Christian influence, but it does not give full expression to that ministry and influence, any more than the spring in the mountain gives full expression to the river, of which it is the beginning and first cause. Consider how many books the Bible has given birth to, and what a vast influence those books have exerted, and are now exerting on the human mind. Reflect, furthermore, how literature has been cleansed and modified by it; and how the poetic imaginations of the race, purified from heathenish conceptions and lewdness, are to-day busily at work swelling the aggregate of virtue and refinement. Where, indeed, has not the influence of the Word penetrated? Where has not the ministry of it, in one form or another, gone? It has entered into literature, and purged it of its indecencies and grossness. It has directed the chisel of the sculptor, and made the marble contribute to its holiest conceptions. It has mingled the colours on the palette, and endowed the canvas with a perpetual power to refine and elevate. It has dictated constitutions to governments; wrenched legalized wrong out of statute, and marshalled the forces of legislation in favour of liberty and man. It has even entered the seat of customs, made commerce an honour and an agent, and joined in close alliance with itself all the manifold forces of business and trade. It is only when you take into account all these wide-branching influences which emanate from the Bible, that you can, even to a partial extent, estimate what it has done, and is doing for the world. Now the ministry of the Word, which has for its object

the removal of man's hostility to God, in its widest sense, includes all these. By as much as you enlighten the race, by as much as you refine away its grossness, by as much as you root out its vices and extract its antagonisms, by so much do you bring it nigher to God. The early rains which precede the summer's warmth do not more surely prepare the earth for the seed, than do these world-wide humanizing tendencies, which, through a lengthened pedigree trace their birth from the Gospels, prepare the souls of men to accept the atonement. There are, I have no doubt, men and women who have been thus indirectly operated upon by the Spirit, until they stand as orchards do in June when ready to break into floral beauty and fragrance as soon as the warm south-west shall blow upon them. You are at the very point of presenting yourselves to God with every faculty in full bloom. Through a literature, which the Gospels have purged and made clean—through home influences, which are the gift of the Cross to the nations that embrace it—through the providential dealings of life and death—through manifold methods, your minds have been enlightened, your consciences quickened, your hearts made tender; and you are as the soil when the sower passes over it with the seed. God grant that the truth may find lodgement in those hearts best prepared for its coming, for so shall it spring up, blossom, and bear fruit after its kind.

I do not want you who have not as yet recorded your love for God to feel that the Sabbath is the only time, or the church the only place, or clergymen the only men, when, where, and by whom the ministry of the Word is proclaimed. The descent of the Spirit is like the distillation of dew—not confined to the hours of one night, but yielded by the heavens under the workings of an organic law of mercy. Wherever you find discipline for your passions, wherever control over your appetites, wherever food and exercise for your virtue, wherever opportunity for benevolent action—whenever or wherever a sight of beauty or sound of harmony, or anything of God or man sweet, pure, and elevating, then and there are you ministered unto out of infinite mercy. Then and there does God

ek to take you, as a gardener does a vine which has been  
 renched away from the trellis, and with the tenderest touch  
 id solicitude train you once more around the prop and pillar of  
 ivine support. There is such a thing as narrowing religion  
 id its offices by the way in which you regard them. Some  
 ok at the ministry as I was wont to amuse myself, when a  
 y, by looking at objects through a glass with the ends  
 versed; and the result is that they see but one man; and  
 hat a small one he often appears to be! My friends, the  
 inister of the Word is not the ministry of it. The one may  
 e very small—he is but a man at the best; but the other is  
 ast, full of expansion—a combination of forces powerful, and  
 ot a few, of whose action and energy God himself is the motive  
 use. The minister is a man with the weaknesses, foibles, and  
 aperflections of a man. His appearance may not please you,  
 is manners and habits of thought and speech may offend you.  
 ique, prejudice, and a superior taste may all combine to make  
 ou dislike him. But the ministry of the Word, who can  
 dislike it? What taste can criticise sunlight? What refine-  
 ent take offence at the solar warmth? The sense of smell  
 ight as soon cry out against fragrance as man's soul revolt  
 ; the sweet ministries of God's love. Now I feel that I am  
 eaking to men who know much of life, to men whose work it  
 to build dams in swift currents, whose very business puts  
 em under daily pressure and temptation; and I wish you  
 l to feel that the ministry of God's Word comes to you  
 ough many channels. The anchor of your hope, friends,  
 not cast within any church, but within the veil, which  
 the presence of God; and your daily words and acts  
 rengthen or sever the strands of which the cable that connects  
 ou therewith is woven. God ministers to you in ways mani-  
 ld and methods not a few—in the crash of your overthrown  
 rtunes cloven by an unexpected bolt; in the wreck of your  
 orldly plans and hopes; in the family altar, or the mournful  
 sence of it; in the habit of caution and prudence which your  
 alings with men have taught you; in the dying and burying  
 ou behold; in the privileges of liberty, and the powers and

pleasures of knowledge that you enjoy. All these are but the methods of his ministry to you. These are the electrified wires along which his messages of warning and direction come. These are his angels, commissioned of his mercy, and whose mouths are full of entreaties higher and more impressive than man's. God's love is like the sun, and it rays its warmth and light along many lines, and its illumination is everywhere. You cannot escape from it. It will be with you in the week to come, yea, and through all the weeks of your lives; and they will be sweetened by the ministries of it as meadows are sweetened by the fragrance of many flowers, seen and unseen—now a breath rising at your very feet, and anon another and a sweeter blown to you from afar.

Now I would that you all might feel this because it is truth, and also might recognize, with most devout gratitude, the source of it. All those ministrations calculated to soften, refine, and lift you come from God through Christ. Every drop in this broad river, on which the world floats like a richly-freighted ship, has come down to us from Calvary. Over the very fountain-head of all these outflowing influences the Cross stands, and will stand for ever as the symbol and sign. And it is because of the love of God to us that our feet stand in such high and privileged places to-day, where we overlook such an auspicious future.

Now it is possible that some of you have fallen, for it is natural for men and women to trip. You stand to-day like those who have entered many races, but never have won in any—discouraged, spiritless, or in a kind of sullen despair. Now I wish all of you who are in any sense in such a condition of mind to cheer up and enter once more. Make one more attempt. Nerve yourselves for a vigorous effort. The eyes of the brave look for ever into azure, the eyes of the coward for ever into blackness. If I could single out that one who has made a greater failure of his life than the majority of us, whose future morally is black, who has reached that lowest state in which a man can stand, when temptation has only to present itself and

he instantly yields to it, who is regarded with sorrow and displeasure by the church, and with suspicion or contempt by the world, I would go to him and say, "My good fellow, cheer up. There is a chance in your future yet." Why, I went down to the scene of a conflagration one day, marked by a heap of ruins from which smoke and steam were still issuing. What a power there is in fire! No wonder that it is used in Scripture as a symbol of hell. What terror there is in the rush and roar of it! What suggestions of stifling, as it whirls a blast of hot air into your face! What a parent of eddyings and whirlwinds its fierce heat is! How it sucks, and roars, and flares, and shoots its columns of red flame upward, as the current which itself has created draws through it! For terror, and power, and suggestions of peril, which make men spring from their beds, and women shriek, and children scream, what can compare with fire? Well, this terrible agent had been at work at that warehouse; it had beaten down the roofs, and pushed over the walls, and dashed down its supports, and broken all its massive braces, and left literally nothing but masses of bent and half-molten iron, the foundation-stones, and the bare earth on which they rested. There never was a more complete ruin, never a more total overthrow. Twelve months after I stood on that corner again. I looked about me bewildered. I crossed the street, and gazed wonderingly upward. Could I believe the evidence of my senses? The ruins had disappeared, every trace of fire was gone, and a massive structure of granite and iron towered high to a hundred feet above my head; and the spacious compartments resounded with the whirl of wheels, the creaking of pulleys, and the shouting of men trundling bales, and straining at the elevators. And I said to myself: "Man is indomitable. No failure discourages, no wreck appalls him. From the ashes of his old the creation of his new conceptions arise, and the failure of yesterday gives birth to the triumph of to-day."

But do you think, good friends, that material ruins are the only ones men can rebuild? Is the destruction of warehouses and mansions the sole destruction he can remedy? Are the pros-



trated columns of trade the only ones he can re-raise and establish? I tell you nay; the same resolution, the same energy, the same hopefulness and effort, carried into the sphere of moral disaster and wreck, will accomplish even more glorious results. I care not what or how much has been overthrown. Honesty, virtue, sobriety—all may have gone down, but so long as the foundation, which is life, is left, so long is there hope and opportunity. So I say to you all, no matter what may have been your failure, nor how total your overthrow—no matter, spiritually, where you stand to-day, nor how black and ugly is the face of the past as it scowls at you through your recollections—you are not lost, you are not undone, you need not despair. You have only to clear away the rubbish from the foundation, and begin again. In this endeavour you will not work alone. There is not a twig on a tree which seeks growth, there is not a flower in the field that craves fragrance, unassisted of God. But are you not of more value in his sight than flowers and trees? Does the sun withhold its rays from a bruised violet which a thoughtless foot has crushed? Do the clouds refuse to condense themselves above the parched ground, and empty from their distended borders the moisture of the shower? Does not the solar beam slant an equal ray upon the mud of your streets and the grass of your lawns? And if God is thus mindful through nature to minister to the inanimate and the senseless, will he be less thoughtful and loving in his provisions for you? Never believe it. You will be ministered to, you will be fed; yea, as young birds blind to the mouth that feeds them, so the providence of God, moving on noiseless wing, will come laden with nourishment, and perch above you, silencing your clamours by supply; and all that is pure and noble in you shall be grown and developed under the brooding love of God, until at the breaking of some bright morning the hour of flight and song will come, and you will never have done with soaring and singing.

I have dwelt thus at length on the ministrations of the Word as a means to remove man's opposition to God, that you might *see how nigh in manifold methods your Heavenly Father comes*

to you in your daily life. I wish all you business-men, and all you young men, and all you labourers, to feel that God's truth is not shut up between the covers of any book, nor proclaimed by any man or class of men alone, but that you may find and feel it anywhere and at all times; that day by day it comes knocking at the door of your hearts seeking entrance. The influence of the Spirit which inclines us toward Christ is not enclosed in pipe-like ordinances and formulas, and led into our churches as you enclose and lead water into your reservoirs. No! it is rather like the water which flows in the river, permeating the earth on either side with its irrigation. It lurks like moisture in the atmosphere, and sifts from the heavens like dew, or falls on human hearts as the outpoured shower upon the thirsty soil in summer. This divine influence is as universal as atmosphere, as generic to the moral order and economy of God as sunshine is to the material world. Your souls are not like birds in a vacuum, which fall plump to the bottom of the jar, and lie gasping and fluttering, unable to lift themselves. They are, rather, as those same birds when in the free outer air, under the curvature of whose wings a strong current of wind is sweeping, and all they need is to poise correctly with easiest inclination this way and that, and the movement beneath lifts them. What a sight it is to see a bird thus suspended above you, and to watch him as he poises with nicest balance, while the invisible but adequate forces under him push him upward until he seems but a tuft of brilliant plumage smitten by the sun! So it is, spiritually, with you all. You do not lie gasping in a morally thin and exhausted atmosphere. You breathe an air full of the bracing element of noble impulses. Underneath you are the uplifting influences of God's Spirit, coursing steady and strong like the wind. I ask you to put yourselves in such a position that you can be lifted. I do not address you as professors or non-professors, as penitent or hardened. I speak as to men and women endowed with reason, gifted with sensibilities to feel, capable of gratitude, able to decide as to what is right and just. I place heaven before you in these closing words. You can see, if you will but look, the

streets, and walls, and gates, and all the outflashing glories of it. You know what a force the Cross is in the world; why it was set up, and what forgiveness of sin and impulses toward virtue men receive from it. I ask why so many of you reject it? Is there not a tide of conviction setting many of you towards it? I feel it to be so. Do not resist, do not struggle against it. Steer directly and joyfully toward it, rather, as ships long buffeted by storm come flying in from the foam and thunder of the tempest-swept ocean toward the protection of the harbour and the quiet waters of the bay.

Suppose that this city should yield itself, in the action of all its inhabitants, to the ministrations of God. Suppose the men who conduct its business, build its houses, swarm its factories, people its streets, and direct its energies, should, in the coming week, by the grace of God, be converted, and ever after bear the name and live the life of Christians. What mind can adequately conceive of the blessed change such an event would cause? What absence of vice, what peace, what prosperity, what hope, would be ours! And yet such a result would be brought about by individual decisions. Though all were converted at the same moment, yet each of you would have to decide for yourself. Who of you will be the first to decide? Quick, for the heavens are watching? Whose is the name that goes first into the skies?

If, as it is said, the fall of a pebble shakes the earth to its centre, how heaven vibrates with the thoughts you are thinking now! To think, and not to conclude; to conclude, only to decide amiss; to add one more grief to the sorrows of the Spirit, one more rejection to the many you have already given to Christ, one more insult to God.

Enough has been spoken—too much if it be in vain. I turn from the shadow to the sunshine, from the clouds and fogs of the present to the pure azure of the future. The banners under which I ask you to serve will yet be blazoned with victory. They will shake out their glory over the heads of those whose feet will enter heaven as the feet of those who are

more than conquerors. Decide as you may, God's purposes will not change. Whether you contend or assist, his cause will move on with the motion of a chariot when a king drives it to victory. Over thrones and proud empires the Nazarene has walked, on shield and pennon his feet have trodden; and to-day, amid the kingdoms of the earth, he marches on, the centre of agencies more destructive than cannon, more terrible than an army with banners. Think you that the cause of which Christ is the leader will fail of complete vindication? Will the influences of which he is parent, which have braved successfully all manner of opposition for so many centuries, which have levelled so many places, overturned so many thrones, broken so many fetters, enlightened so many minds, ever die? It cannot be. We shall go to our grave, fellow-Christians, but we shall go as warriors have gone who have lived long enough to know that their bravery was not in vain. We shall sleep, not as those who have no hope, but as they who hear far down the future the smiting of victorious shields, and the shoutings of a great multitude. Amid the tumult and commotions of the earth, amid the roar of all battles, the Christian hears but one voice, publishing itself with the sustained clearness of a bugle, saying only this, but saying it for ever, "Behold, I make all things new." And God, who is over all, shall minister unto all, until this Divine assurance shall have been fulfilled.

I invoke the Spirit of Christianity. I invoke her presence in your hearts, in your homes, throughout all your streets. Under her inspiration may you live, and by the winged mercies of it be at last lifted into the skies. For so will it come about that you will die easily when you come to die, and put your arms around the pillars of Death, not with fear and shrinking, but as those who find that they have arrived at a happy opportunity.

## CHRISTIANITY AS A CIVILIZATION.

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

*"And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."*—MAL. iii. 3.

IN discussing the proposition suggested by this text, that Christianity is a civilization, it will be necessary to think of civilization in two lights—the one as the condition of the individual, the other as a power to influence others standing apart from its condition. What mankind needs is, not simply a picture of an elevated human life, but also an agency that will rapidly cast men into the likeness of this ideal picture. Individuals have always been visible here and there who have, in their minds and hearts, reflected the features of almost the ideal manhood; but their virtues have been unable to multiply themselves infinitely in the outer world; and living, they never perceived virtue to have gone out from their garments at a world's touch; and dying, they have taken their moral excellence into their tombs, as Beatrice took away her beauty with her.

History is dotted over with names of such piety as marked Aurelius, and Cato, and Xenophon; but as, between the stars of heaven, there are awful solitudes across which light itself flies invisible, and which no sound of even thunder or softest music has ever blessed, so between these isolated characters of the past, there have lived and died countless millions of the human family, without excellence and without hope—awful

solitudes of the soul. In seeking, therefore, for a desirable civilization, it is necessary for us to find a culture that will overflow. We seek a Nile that shall cross its banks in June, and make the whole adjoining empire pass from a wilderness to a garden. That this is what we should seek may be learned in an instant by a glance at the world, for that glance reveals the fact that the moral harvest of any one age is only a reduplication of the seed sown in the age before; that, for example, the Christian church is only a reduplication of the Seventy, the Seventy a harvest from the Twelve, the Twelve an overflow from Christ, with Christ himself an outreaching from eternity. Thus it becomes perfectly evident that when we seek a civilization, we must find one, if possible, that possesses the aggressive power and genius that will open out, frn-like, and pass from one to many, incapable of rest as to labour, and as to its aspirations and conquests. Christianity seems to me to surpass all other reforms in these two needed particulars; it presents us with a high type of manhood, and a manhood that flows outward from one to many. Let us, then, direct our attention first to the Christian character as a civilization.

Impossible or difficult as it may be to find a definition of civilization, it will answer the demands of the hour in which we meet together as a public, common assemblage, and not as exact philosophers, if we state that man is civilized when all his faculties of mind and heart are active within their spheres, not falling short of Nature's law, nor going beyond it. Under "faculties" must be included conscience, and all the tender sentiments of friendship, love, sympathy, and religion, for, without these, a character may possess greatness in many respects, but not that perfect blending which seems to give us the perfect manhood. The word, whose definition we seek primarily, means fitted for organized society, fitted for the state. The wild man, whose club is in his law, may become so transformed in thousands of years that he is fitted, at last, for a home in a community where many ages, and conditions, and qualities of soul meet with equal rights, and where egotism must give place

to the confession of others. Out of the peculiar demands of society, demands for reciprocity, for kindness, for liberality, for thought, for respect to law and morals, and out of the mental and æsthetic culture which the wise state brings, to be fitted for state life soon came to be synonymous with the idea of perfect manhood. Edmund Burke says: "The spirit of civilization is composed of two parts, the spirit of a gentleman, and the spirit of religion." This is only another way of informing us that civilization is a life lived as in the presence of man and God. But cull the definition from what fields you may, and express it in what words you prefer, and yet the New Testament, through Christ in his discourses, or through Paul in his letters, will surpass all other analyses, from sources modern or ancient. When to personal purity of deed, and even of thought, Christ adds the command to love one's neighbour as one's self, and to be kind even to enemies, he has reached the ideal; for when the wave of virtue flows within the heart, and the wave of good deeds flows outside, all round, we have found a manhood full armed for life in its varied responsibilities. It would seem that Paul, in his chapter upon charity, was expressly describing the perfect gentleman. "Charity suffereth long, and is kind. Charity envieth not. Charity boasteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Evidently in living up to such a picture we should all make a grand approach toward a civilized life.

From causes which we cannot enumerate here, publicists have been unwilling to look at the religion of the Bible in any other light than that of a special mode of escape from future ills, ills beyond the grave; and wishing to study the philosophy of states, the conditions of a good citizenship here, have turned over all heathen pages and over all other pages not set apart by and for a priesthood. It has long been a custom of philosophic minds to pass in silence any lessons of civilization upon the pages of Scripture, and patiently to seek and deeply to

love everything in Aristotle or Plato—a blossoming of prejudice only paralleled by the Christians who despise everything from Plato or Aristotle.

Permit me now to assume that the truly Christian character is a highly civilised character, for this is not an important branch of our inquiry. To discover a good analysis of the ideal man is not so difficult as it is to find some power that may induce the largest number to come up toward this ideal. Hence, our second proposition, that Christianity possesses in a large measure the power to influence those standing afar off is the question of most interest, and the work of most difficulty, for even could we draw from the classic or Hindoo world a complete definition of manhood, we should seem to need a Christ to enable the human race to realize the dream betrayed in the definition.

In order to produce a universal manhood, we must find a truth that overflows, a philosophy the opposite of egotism, a philosophy deeply altruistic. Our world of love must include our neighbour, for human welfare does not spring only from what one has, but from what this favoured one can or will give away. A religion in which one good man becomes ten good men is the only one that will offer society hope. Now the grand attribute of Christ and his method is this, living for others. Christ himself was a putting aside of Heaven's peace and joy, for earth's sorrow, a springing away from his own life, and a descent into human life. His heart burst the limitations of self, and so loved the world that he scattered, as it were, the garments of his own glory over the unclothed human race, that they might each possess a wedding garment, and he opened over earth an urn of righteousness that sinners, poor in such riches, might gather up this manna, rained down in the night, and be just at last before God. Thus, if there is one sentence which more than others may express the genius of this Christ, it is this: He was a goodness that rolled outward, a love whose rays, like those of the sun, darted away from itself. How far the light of our sun may fly before it becomes invisible! Let us suppose an earth ten times as far away as our own would still



catch some daily smiles from that orb, you can imagine what a vast circle, two thousand millions of miles wide, would all be filled perpetually by the light of that central fire. In the world of morals, Christianity is a love which thus from one heart moves outward and contemplates nothing less than shining upon each face that is seen or shall be seen walking the paths in this vale. Christianity is not by accident nor by common natural law only, but by its whole special genius and yearnings, a contagion of truth and virtue. As God placed in the grain of wheat a hidden germ, by which that one grain will become a hundred, and will not by any means remain in its egoism, unless it die, so in the religion of Jesus there is an implanted longing, such that no Christ-like soul will consent to walk along through life, or to heaven, without wishing to drag all society with it to the sublime destiny. It would be vain, so far as all society is thought of, if Christ's religion held only good doctrines for individual hearts, for only here and there one would find them, just as Marcus Aurelius found piety and Zenobia virtue. It is not enough that faith in the Divine Being is a saving influence, and that repentance is also a saving grace, and that a new heart is possible, and that pardon is possible in the Christian system; but, given these great paths to heaven, it is essential that those who find them, receive along with them a desire to hurl their sunlight outward upon faces standing in the valley and shadow of death. Above all other systems Christianity is an aggressive civilization. Its hearts are in Greenland to-day among the snows, and in Ceylon among the flowers, in Africa among the negroes, in Oregon among the Indians, bearing all hardships because their religion is the overthrow of self, and the enthronement of mankind; an imitation of the cross where the blessedness of the multitude was purchased by the sorrows of one.

Having seen now that Christianity possesses the two elements of a civilization, the ideal, and the power to spread the ideal, let us defend it against some parts of its history. Our age alone is the fortunate one that has come anywhere near reading aright the religion of Christ. I will confess that all intermediate

ages have attempted to spread their religion, but almost the only element they drew from their Divine Saviour was the desire to make their faith universal. But what the faith was, or how to make their neighbour receive it, they seemed never to have dreamed. It does not argue against a sentiment that men have erred as to what path it should follow. The Hindoo mother loves her child, and often for that reason tosses it to the Ganges god; and there was an old nation once in which filial love made it customary to put the old father and mother to death when their powers were well along in decline; and yet the sentiments of maternal and filial love are sacred sentiments, and ask only that they may flow in the channels of pure reason. Thus the zeal for spreading religion is Christ-like, and is the hope of the world, but it must make no mistake and slaughter a group of Jews or burn an infidel, for in doing so it sustains the same relation to a religious sentiment, that the mother sustains to the maternal instinct who offers her child to a god, or that the children sustain to filial love who put to death their grand, old, loving parents. When we read in the reign of Frederick that when a Christian child disappeared, it was customary to rush forth and accuse and kill a few Jews, and that three hundred Jews were put to death on account of the disappearance of three boys, which boys were afterwards found in a stream, where they had been, all alone, playing upon the ice, and had broken in without any Jewish assistance, we can no more reproach Christianity than we may charge religion in general with the deaths under Juggernaut, or with the burning of widows. In all that cruel era, there was little trace of Christ as unfolded in the Testament; and in a large part of the era when church and state were identified, little remained of Christianity except the disposition to spread itself; it lost all else; it defined itself to be power, and spread itself by the sword. While, however, with the calmest minds, the actual history of this sublime religion does not vitiate its theory, yet, it being a fact that the great public is not remarkable for calm justice, confidence in Christianity as a reform seems to-day greatly

shaken, and it will need all the wisdom and piety and tenderness of its friends for a century to make it stand forth before the human race as the most complete saviour of men. I fully believe that this religion of Jesus could be so preached, and so lived, and so applied to society, that in two generations a pure rationalism (excluding the supernatural) or a cold materialism would nowhere be taught; and that legislators and statesmen would begin their careers by a study of Christ, as a teacher and an impulse. Suppose that in all the next half century the church should resume the idea of an overflowing religion as Christ held it and acted it; that, widening out from fashionable avenues and costly churches, and the luxury of a saint's rest, it should reach out its hands to the poor, and build a score of neat churches in this city, furnished with organ and books, and with a teacher for each who understood and loved the populace; imagine the whole church to change its whole policy for this fifty years, and, instead of running from the multitudes, actually turn and go toward them, as the women are now going toward the crowds, carrying not an abstract definition of Trinity and atonement, but prayers and hymns, and a sufficient inviting, persuading, mediating Christ, and if Christianity did not in the end wring from the world the confession that it alone is a civilizing power, worthy of earth and heaven, then it would seem that the relation between cause and effect is only a delusion. Open this religion, and you will see the wheels of a great machine. As the ponderous engine hurls the steamship from America to England, makes it run like a vast shuttle from shore to shore, thus the gospel of Christ lies ready to move all society, and make it fly from vice to virtue, though wide is the dark sea between. But not yet has the church put this machinery into motion. When the American government gave the Japanese a locomotive and car, and put down for them a circle of track, that foreign land was delighted; but, strange delight! it led the officials to go upon festal days and ride around the magic iron ring, giving them a schoolboy happiness, but not leading them to throw a line quickly across

the empire. Are you prepared to deny that thus we have used the Christian religion? Have we not kept it for home use, and refused to fling it across the empire? Instead of preaching the gospel to ten thousand people, is not each clergyman employed to preach it ten thousand times to the same people? The life of Christ, the life of his disciples, the history of all revivals from Paul's day to Westley's and Whitefield's, and to our own Moody's, announce the genius of Christianity to be that of outgoing love, a love which grows by going, and dies in any confinement, in any repose.

This trait of ideal Christianity, that it is an action rather than a philosophy, has often been the accidental cause of its shame, as well as the perpetual cause of its honour. A prominent reason why the reforms of Mill, and Comte, and the *Westminster Review* have remained so beautiful, is to be found in the fact that they have descended into the dust of actual work. It is not Comte or Tyndall who must plead with the begrimed miners of England, it is Moody and Sankey. Hence upon these last names must gather all the associations of the ragged clothes, the superstition and fanaticism of the crowd. From Gibbon to Huxley, rationalism has never stirred up the untaught multitude, but has enjoyed the better association of porches of philosophy and shelves of walnut in the library. When we saw in the exposition the many elegantly painted reaping machines, we stole a glance into the future, and pictured them as they would appear after they had been dragged over the prairies from June to September. The rational methods have received greetings in the temples of learning and art, and we behold the whiteness of their vesture and their calmness of face; and on the other side we behold the Christian Idea with the forehead marked with care and browned in the sun, but we forgive this marred beauty, for we know in what wide fields of time and eternity she has toiled since Bethlehem, and upon us bursts the vision of One "whose visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." So far as rationalistic reforms have escaped the historic association of

fanaticism and bloody persecutions, so far as they have burned no Servetus and banished no Quakers, the desirable result must be attributed in part to the fact that they are a theory more than a life; the opposite of Christianity, for the moment, it learns of its Master and its heaven; it rushes forth and permits the beggar to associate his rags with this Jesus, and the Methodist to pierce his sky with shouts, the temperance women to kneel in the streets, and the African slaves to sing rude hymns all night long in a strange ecstasy around this cross.

Christ has stood so near the people that they have wreathed his cross with their infirmities at the very hour when they crowded around it to find their salvation. And it is this nearness to the human heart which has made Christianity drench with blood fields over which infidelity would have whispered "peace," for religion has always been an active, powerful sentiment, and hence its errors have been as active as its truths. As jealousy attends love, and is impossible in cold, indifferent hearts, so, often, cruelty has gathered about religion in its dark cloud; but those awful facts reveal a passion which shall become the world's hope far beyond any promise which a cold, intellectual reform can ever offer to mankind. As love in a wrong path, or itself wronged, may become an agony and a cruelty, but in its full light and wisdom opens out into a paradise, so Christianity, escaping from errors of doctrine and practice, opening forth in all its fulness of truth, and in all its divineness of method—a method by which one heart transfers its truth and hope to its neighbour's heart—flowing beyond old channels and breaking over into the fields of the poor, poor in gold and in virtue; thus rushing outward with Christ everywhere for its leader and motive, Christianity, I repeat, will either become the world's civilization, or else we must bow in sorrow, and declare the generations to come of sin and wrong to be utterly without hope. It may not be easy to feel that Christ's gospel shall reform the world, for the world is so vast that our feeble minds may be forgiven if they are appalled at *the task*; but it seems easy to feel that this gospel is the only

hope, for to truths the most divine and the most complete, omitting nothing that pertains to mind, body, and soul, that pertains to the now or the future, it goes beyond this rare excellence, and adds that without which all truth is vain—a spiritual awakening and inspiration. It is not ideas alone that transform the world, but ideas with an inspiration in them crowding them from dream to life. The truths of Christ's reform possess that impulse which comes from their lying outspread, not only in the light of earth, but in that of eternity. Not only the happiness of society here is in them, but hell and heaven fill them up with their awful or sweet mystery, their fear and hope. But their cup of virtues is not yet full, for Christ is in it also, not as a teacher only, who is simply remembered, but as an ever-present spirit, cheering the soul to-day just as he blessed men eighteen hundred years ago; and if the heart need anything more, it may find it in the consciousness that the Father of all, the Almighty, lies under these ideal truths, lifting them up into life as he moves the ocean into storms or smiles.

Here, then, is a reform adequate in its truths and in its motives. What detains it from its great mission? It waits simply for man. It waits for the church to escape from the letter which killeth to the spirit which giveth life; it waits for the Christian throng to enter, not their sanctuary only, vocal with music and eloquence, but the world, vocal with wailings and eloquent with tears; waits for its ministry to pass from doctrines which confuse the intellect and transform the church into a school of debate, to the doctrines which lie upon human life like a child upon its mother's heart, dear and inseparable; waits for a breadth of mind and soul to come that will not contract theology into the limits of a stagnant pool, but will expand it into an ocean such that along with faith and repentance all the charities, and all liberty, and all culture, and all the great temperance pleadings, shall seem also cardinal doctrines of God, weaving the wreath of his glory, and issuing from his throne to man in garments more radiant for earth than any which, far away from human sense, flow around the *profound mysteries of religion.*

## A NEW HEART.

BY REV. E. H. CHAPIN, D.D.

*"Make you a new heart and a new spirit."*—EZEKIEL xviii. 31.

THESE were the words which the Lord, through the lips of the prophet, addressed in mingled tones of warning and encouragement to the rebellious house of Israel; but they are words fitted to the ears and to the souls of communities and individuals in all times. They break upon us to-day. Each of us may interpret them according to his own need and condition. "Make you a new heart and a new spirit."

Let me proceed to observe, in the first place, that this is an exhortation which, in one form or another, every man needs to hear. There are a great many theories which are rendered almost superfluous by actual facts, and it is sad to think how much of our theorizing—of our religious theorizing especially—is practically useless, and worse than useless—how much of it is mere waste and hindrance, because we do not theorize and work at the same time; but our theorizing prevents our working. Here is a man who has to cross a river. There is no difficulty in crossing—the bridge is there—it is plain and palpable; but he stops to speculate how the bridge could have been erected—how it could span the river—and he goes still deeper into subtleties, and speculates how it is possible that he has the power of crossing it, and all the while neglects the work before him in theories that amount to no practical value, if they ever could be decided.

Now, here is a simple, practical work set before a man—to make himself a new heart and a new spirit. So far as man's own immediate action is concerned, there is little reason why he should perplex himself with controversies or questionings about human ability and total depravity. I do not say that the truth or falsehood of these theories is not an important consideration. The truth or falsehood of any theory is important that bears upon spiritual realities, and colours all our views of God, and life, and duty. This is the value of doctrinal truth. Not that it gives us intellectual or logical consistency; not that it constitutes a sharp-edged system with which we can win a controversy; but it is valuable because of the great truths it clears up, and the different stand-points from which we may look upon God, our own souls, our own relations, possibilities, and powers. But I say no man need trouble himself long with theories, so far as his own immediate duty is concerned, in this demand for practical action; for whether he be tainted with Adam's sin or not, he is a sinner; whether he be totally depraved or not, there is enough overbalancing evil in him, enough of wrong affections and triumphant sin, to excite him to endeavour to make for himself a new heart and a new spirit.

So this exhortation before us is no mere historical saying, fossilized in the past—bound up with the history of the rebellious Jews. It is a living word, and speaks at this very hour, vibrating from heaven throughout every soul: "Make you a new heart and a new spirit."

Another question may be disposed of, when we consider how practical this appeal is, and that is the question of, Who makes a new heart? Do you make it, or does God make it? Now, a little further back in this same book of Ezekiel we find God's agency brought pre-eminently forward, when he says, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." Now here, as almost everywhere else, we find two poles to one truth, one referring to God, and one to man; but the moment we come to act, they are reconciled. If



one warms into earnest effort upon the idea of having a new heart and a new spirit, the two conditions of God's agency and man's agency will melt together. If he stand still in cold, barren speculation, he freezes to death. God does something, and you have something to do in this achievement of making a new heart and a new spirit. The Apostle puts the two agencies close enough together, I think, when he says, "Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do." Now, there is no more difficulty about the theory of making a new heart, or entering upon a religious life, than there is about anything else, the moment we enter earnestly into action. But it certainly seems a very perplexing and discouraging procedure to keep urging a man to turn from evil, and get rid of his bad habits and affections—to make himself a new heart and a new spirit—and then to add that he can do nothing for himself, but must wait the breath and influence of God—must wait until God gives him a new heart and spirit. As I said before, so I take occasion to say now, that I verily believe that one reason why people stand aloof so much from the religious life, from entering heartily and earnestly into it, is the fact that it has been presented in such a vague and perplexing way, and encumbered with so many speculations; so that we have really a kind of preaching which urges upon men the great guilt of their sin and their alienation from God, and then tells them that they can do nothing of themselves. And I repeat this is all borne away by the simple condition, that a man must be in earnest in regard to this new heart and spirit. And it is a mistake to suppose that God is not glorified when we dwell upon the point of human action. When we say you can make a new heart and a new spirit, it is a great mistake to suppose that we take the glory from God. For whence come all good desires and all right actions? They proceed from God, and from him alone. And so do all strength and all ability. One of the greatest intellectual errors into which a man can fall, is the habit of ignoring the divine in the common, and looking for it only in the special and unfamiliar, not to see God in the ordinary machinery of action,

not to behold him in ordinary processes ; but if something strange bursts upon us, something not in accordance with the usual course of events, then to recognise the divine, it is not the thing itself, its utility, its beauty, its power, that stamps it as divine—only its strangeness.

You see in this tendency the danger] that we are apt to encounter. The moment we can discover the law of the event, the moment we find it taking its place in the order of natural sequence, it becomes no longer divine ; and so, by-and-by, all nature becomes atheistic. There was a time when almost every phenomenon in nature was unaccounted for, and everything was called divine ; but as fast as its law was discovered, and it took its place in the order of natural sequence, the thing was no more divine ; that only which was mysterious and unknown being placed in that category. And so, as the torch of investigation advances farther and farther into the realms of nature's laws, men could limit the Divine, and at length eliminate it from all things. No, the truest philosophy is that which recognises everything as divine ; that sees in all laws, in all constituted order, in the flow of common events, in the movements of familiar things, the Divine hand, the Divine presence and power, just as much as in the strange and marvellous that startle the mind, and weigh it down with awe.

I repeat, all strength, all ability, is from God. A man does not get an education, any more than a new heart, of himself. Is it not Providence that furnishes the circumstances which may incite him to the pursuit of an education, and help him to get it ? Is it not Providence that touches the mysterious processes of the mind by which education becomes possible ? Now, suppose we should say, "This matter of getting a new heart is a process of self-education ;" it would be reduced to simple terms, and yet a great many would start from it, and say, "This won't do ; it is too cold and naturalistic—too much of human agency to call getting religion a process of self-education. And yet what is self-education but the inspiration and the life of the divine ? You do not strike God out when you put

human agency in. In reality, this is the sum of the matter, self-education, in the Christian spirit and Christian life, is the process of getting a new heart and a new spirit with the Divine agency implicated with it, and apparent in it. A man does not steer a ship, does not sow a seed, does not lay a brick of himself; God works with him; implicated, in the last analysis, in the mysterious action both of the mind and body. Why will we turn divine inspiration out of the broad area of human affairs, and limit it only to the Bible? Grant that, in a fuller and more peculiar measure, it flowed into him who penned the Psalms, and those who spoke burning words of prophecy; grant that, with a peculiar light, it beamed forth from the face of the Apostles; still, at the same time, has God breathed no inspiration at all into other men? Grant that the old heathen sages were not in the advanced light of divine revelation; were they so utterly excluded from God that their words of wisdom and of love were but mere words of man's wisdom? Was that the measure of moral stature to which they attained—utterly excluded from God? Is any achievement of man—of the cunning pencil, the strong hammer—the work of the eye or the arm—of the eager muscles, or the bounding brain—entirely without God's help and agency?

The fact is just this: God stands ready with his conditions, which are necessary to all human effort and to all success, whenever man is ready to fall in with those conditions. When we set the sail, the wind will blow; when we sow the seed, the agencies that God himself has prepared in the atmosphere and in the earth will perform their part; and when we set ourselves to work to make a new heart, God's spirit will breathe upon us and help us to consummate the work. That is the answer to all quibbles about prayer—how God Almighty can answer prayer, and yet keep the laws of the physical universe stable. Why, the laws of the physical universe do not transcend all laws. There is a realm of spirit above the mere physical where man comes in contact with God, and God comes in contact with man; and if we fall in with those spiritual laws, if we respond

to those superior conditions, then there is no physical law intercepted or violated because God answers our prayer. How do you know that a physical law is violated if, when a man prays for inward strength to overcome temptation, God breathes it into him? Where is the violation of a physical law? How much do you know of disease; how much do our physicians know of disease? We can see that they do not deny that God Almighty can touch the secret springs of his agencies, so that when we pray that a friend may get well, that friend may be healed. Fall in with the conditions of prayer, just as you fall in with the conditions of the growth of harvest during seed-time. God stands ready with his subtle agencies of light, air, and soil; sow your seed, and harvest will come. So God stands with his agencies of inspiration and deliverance; breathe your prayer, and you have touched the spring of established agencies by which it shall be answered. Seek to get a new heart with all your might, just as you seek an education. God stands ready to do his work with his agencies, and the glory redounds to him. Just put yourself in the attitude to receive them; go to work to make a new heart, just as if you were ambitious men, and were going to make an effort for human power; or as if you had lost a fortune, and were going to work to make a new one; or as if you had your reputation tainted, and you were going to try to retrieve it.

Yes, go to work to make a new heart; act earnestly about it, and God will do his part. You will not take glory to yourself. No man that knows what it is to strive to overcome evil affection within, and sore temptations without, to grow better and purer, will take anything to himself in working out that deliverance. If in any degree he shall attain that end, he will feel that he has had Divine help—that something higher than he has breathed into him and inspired him. The very process of his work will show where he touches God, and where God Almighty has helped him, and he will give all the glory to him. So it is perfectly consistent with God's power and glory to speak to us in the words of the text, "Make you a new heart and a new spirit."

It is a call to action. What are you waiting for? Actually, people are waiting, in the matter of the religious life, for some strange event to take place—either some outward concurrence of God's providence, or else some inward motion of his mysterious help which they can palpably feel, before they can turn in and answer the prophet's appeal made in the text. Waiting for what? To have a right heart and a right spirit. Some are waiting for a great shock or convulsion which shall run over the community, termed a religious revival; or, as I have before remarked, for some strange act of Providence. My friend, you will be in no better condition a year hence, if you live, than you are now. You will never be in a better condition than now to make yourself a new heart. The call is at once; it is now. The divine agencies are ready; it is only for you to surrender yourself to the conception of the great purpose and the great aim, and God will answer, and the blessing will come flowing within. It is a question of agency, and we need have no fear of attributing too much to human efforts.

In the next place, let us consider the peculiarity which this power and privilege of making a new heart exhibits in man. It is a wonderful thing that a man can make himself a new heart. How all little, shallow scepticisms go down before one grand moral fact! Superficial science affects to see in man nothing but a superior animal—a highly developed ape; and judged solely by its standard, man is but little superior, and in some respects appears inferior, to the higher order of brutes. But when we seek to find the true standard of excellence, how distinct he stands from all the creatures around him! The moment we make that exploration, we discover that there is a progressive power in him, by which he advances from limit to limit, from point to point, and by which even the lowest soul exhibits a capacity of boundlessness and a power of changing the life, while the most solid materials of this round globe become, before the inspiration of his spirit and skill of his intellect, as *clay to the potter*. All sealed things he unloosens; all secrets *he lays open*; and as he marches on from point to point of

civilization, of glory, of intellectual attainment, of scientific achievement, by the inward power within him, the outward world is changed, and assumes aspects that reflect his genius and thought.

But there is more than this in man. There is the power of going into himself, and quarrying in the deep places of his own soul. There is a power of changing the tendency and plane of his own life. You never heard of that in the brutes. They all run in the same round, move forward in the same direction, revolve in the same orbit from age to age. But man has the power of stopping short, changing his direction, lifting up the level of his life, and becoming a new being. So it is the inward change that makes him the new being. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?" No; but man is capable of a moral change that makes him actually a new creature. For what constitutes the new man? Not change of bodily vesture, not change of outward circumstances. The man has not necessarily a new life when he is transported to some other scene of action; and in localizing heaven, in making it a material scene, it is a great mistake to suppose that all that is to constitute the future life of man is a change of place and condition. Oh, no; the new life consists in having a new heart and a new spirit, wherever man is placed. Paul in the dungeon at Philippi sings in the very orchestra of heaven, and makes it ring with his psalms. And John on the isle of Patmos sees the walls of the new Jerusalem, with their golden doors and crystal foundations. It is not where a man is, but what he is, that makes the new life, the new man, the new condition. It is the new spirit that comes into a man that produces the great and vital change. This is the new birth of which Christ spoke to Nicodemus. Man should be born again; he should enter into a new spiritual life, with new affections, new aims, new points of view, new tendencies. If you could give a man a new physical creation, if you could take literally the old *fleshy heart out of him, and put in a new fleshy heart, that would not give him a new spirit and make a wise man of him, and that is*

the reason why these two things are conjoined in the text. They are one thing. "Make you a new heart and a new spirit," and then you have the new man—then you have new life.

Oh, how wonderfully religion adjusts itself to the great facts and needs of human nature! for is there anything that could be stated of such immediate and vital importance as this simple appeal, "Make yourself a new heart?" Religion does not circle around a man in metaphysical speculation. It does not go back to historical and ethnological questions. It comes and sets itself right down before the citadel [of a man's sin and want; it strikes right at the vital point; it says, Make yourself a new heart; cast away your transgressions; rise with a new spirit and a new aim; seek the great ends for which God has made you to live; seek the ideal which Christ sets up before you. Is it not a great thing that a man has this power—I ask once more—this possibility, that he can go to the most abandoned creature that God has made in the shape of humanity, and have the strong assurance to say to him, "Oh, castaway—oh, ingrate—oh, alien from your Father and from Christ your Saviour, stir, oh, stir under those cerements of abomination; quicken to new life under all the darkness and dreadfulness of sin; make yourself a new heart and become a new man? Man is immensely separated from all creatures round and about him in this capacity and this privilege.

Out of this change come all other changes. No movement for the regeneration of society, no measure for the improvement of the world, can be radically effective, only as it comes out of the reservoirs of individual hearts. It is a good world or a bad world as men's hearts are good or bad. Man himself is the world, and as he is so things will be. How vital, how radical, then, is the appeal made in the text! In all conditions of life, in all trials, in all misfortunes, this is what we want—a new heart—and then the aspect of things will be changed. Because we cannot always change things themselves. The man that is ~~born~~ down by calamity cannot alter his calamity. There

stands before him—the misfortune that perhaps has blasted well-founded hopes, deprived him of his property or his station in society. But make yourself a new heart; fall into harmony with God's law in the matter; see your misfortune in a providential point of view, far up in the light of some higher and grander purpose which God has in store for you, and look if the thing will be changed. It will stand there as a calamity if you look at it in your old way; but if you look at it in the light of God's providence, it will be a new thing to you.

Oh, mourning friend, weeping companion, bowed down and desolate soul, death is a terrible fact, and it cannot be altered. The green grave is there to be covered by the winter snow; the vacant house, the empty chair, the garments never to be worn again, the echoes never more to be awakened, the voice of music never again to peal in your ear, are all sad mementoes; but make yourself a new heart, come into accordance with the infinite design and purpose, and even in this heavy affliction will your soul become attuned and accorded to that perfect trust in God which Christ had when he took the cup and drank it, and the aspect of calamity will be changed to you. It is the new heart you want. That is the great distinction in men—the heart; not simply conventional motives. If a man has what is called a good heart, then we can trust him. However in fault for the moment he may seem, however wrong may be his course (not that he is to make the possession of a good heart an excuse for his errors; that is not an excuse; you are not good-hearted the moment you offer that excuse for your sin), we who have no right to judge harshly our fellow-man, we who cannot pass sentence upon his short-comings, can make large allowance from the fact that under his temporary aberrations the man has a good heart. The most hopeless case is where a man's heart is all corrupted. Beauty grows as ghastly as a skeleton the moment we find that under the rosy cheeks and bright eyes there is a false, hollow heart. Talent becomes but as a mere *torchlight* that is carried among tombs—like those burning *exhalations* we see in swamps—the moment we find that under



the brilliant intellect there is a false, rotten, corrupted heart. Thus it is in the motives of the heart that we are to distinguish and estimate men.

But there is another respect in which men differ, and that is in strength and capacity of heart; so that some men are distinguished by the fact that in all calamities, in all trials, they gather out of their hearts the resources of a new and better life. It is just like a perpetual spring within them. If one form of contemplated good perishes, if one hope drops away, if one resource fails, down they go, down into their hearts again, and call up something else. A great strong heart is never overcome. It finds its own resources and falls back into its own possibilities. It is sad to find a man who says, "I have no heart;" to see a forlorn creature who says, "I have no power to struggle any more;" but as long as there is no blight or taint, the power, the possibility, of the man is left. See how that physical calamity which occurred to him in his early years would have affected some men. They would have crouched literally by the wayside of life, and even if they had had that man's powers they would have made their calamity an excuse for a life of idleness and waste. How was it with him? He fell back into his own great and noble heart, and out of it he brought up new life which became to him a strength and power that perhaps he never would have exhibited had not that misfortune happened to him. But for that he might have been a scholar; or much worse, a politician; but the twilight of almost total blindness having fallen on him, he called up those powers, and concentrated them upon the great work of history; and when building up this historical structure, just as an architect builds up a great cathedral, like that at Cologne, standing forth majestic and glorious, he profited by the very calamity that excluded him from other pursuits and aims. Yea, and with a still nobler spirit, when others lamented his calamity, and sought to condole with him in his misfortune, he sang songs in the night, and spoke noble words of cheer and encouragement. Now, I say it was not out of the intellect, but *out of a noble and faithful heart*, streamed forth that beautiful

life which made this man one of the stars in the constellation of our literature.

“Make you a new heart.” How vital this is! It goes below all things else. It goes to the centre of a man’s personality, and out of it springs all real life. Not make yourself new brains. We do not want them so much as hearts. Not new conditions. We see men well endowed with conditions, but not with the will to use them. We want new hearts; not new intellectual powers. We cannot make new brains, but we can, every one of us, make a new heart. The great consideration is, Do we desire a new heart? What is the life within? Are we selfish? Are we gravitating simply to this world, living within our aims, vain cares, and uses? Across the sweep of ages come the prophet’s words, “Make you a new heart and a new spirit.” There is nothing vague or mysterious about it. Change your affections if they are selfish; change your aim if it is low; lift up your eyes to that mark of the high calling to which Christ draws you, and let the spirit that was in him be in you. That is making a new heart. Take your heart with earnest purpose and fervent prayer to the cross of Christ, hold it up as a chalice, and let him fill it with his divine excellence and divine self-sacrifice, and then, in the possession of his quickening spirit, you will have a new heart.

## MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRIT.

BY REV. OCTAVIUS PERINCHIEF.

*"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God : and if children, then heirs ; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."*—ROMANS viii. 16, 17.

THE Apostle in this chapter enters upon a contrast between the works of the flesh and the works of the spirit ; in other words, the contrast is between a carnal condition and a spiritual condition. This material world, these physical bodies, are just as much a part of God's work as the spiritual world, these souls of ours. Inherently in the nature of things there is no more evil in one than in the other. Both are right, as God made them ; both are good, or he would not have made them. One is implied in the other ; they supplement each other, or, more properly perhaps, one is but a means to the other—soul is the end, body is the means ; soul is the temple, body is the stairs to reach it. Or soul may be but a higher circle of one and the same being, of which body is but a lower circle. Soul embraces body, but body embraces not soul. One hundred embrace fifty and ten and one, but one and ten and fifty do not embrace one hundred. The calculus embraces arithmetic, but arithmetic embraces not the calculus. Soul has her laws, and body has her laws, and yet there are not two laws, but one law—i.e., not two *systems of law*, but parts of the same system ; they are not at *strife with each other*, but sweetly harmonic and mutually *unifying*. The brain and the body are not at variance. The

Brain has a mental work to do, and the hands a physical work; but in their health and perfection they are in harmony, and each is minister to the other. So has God made body and soul.

In actual life, however, you never find a perfectly sound mind in a perfectly sound body. Some force of ignorance, of error—some force latent and inherited, or palpable and cultivated—leads men to cultivate body at the expense of mind, or mind at the expense of body; and so a perfect man, except in Jesus Christ, this world has not known. So, likewise, a perfect soul in a perfect body, a perfect harmony between soul and body—in other words, a holy being—except in Christ Jesus, has been unknown to man. All this race, from ignorance first, and then from wilfulness which ignorance produces, has lapsed into transgression—*i.e.*, into violation of laws both spiritual and physical, and so into what is scripturally called sin. Men have all along lived only in their lower nature—in their carnality—ungoverned by their spiritual nature. Men are living there still. If you cut off the head from the body, the body dies. Not only so, if you derange the brain—even if you leave the brain uncultivated, so that its judgments are weak and foolish when they ought to be strong and wise—the body goes to destruction. Cut off brain from a man or nation, and you get death and corruption. So, cut off soul from body, and you get moral death and corruption. The actual state of man, therefore, is hence a carnal state—*i.e.*, it is almost exclusive carnality, and hence it is a degraded, corrupt state—a state of sin, a state of condemnation, a ruin, a mass of suffering, as if it were undergoing a penalty. The harmony, the peace, the perfection even of the bodily being, are all lost—gone. Paul speaks here of the actual state, not the theoretic state, or what might be called man's first estate, and hence he says the spirit warreth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit. These are contrary the one to the other—*i.e.*, there is actual war going on. The carnal nature is fond of folly, sensual indulgence, fond of all that is unreal and make-believe. It accepts means for ends—*present for future*. Being is blurred all the way through;

real spirit is unknown to it. If it think of the spirit and undertake to minister thereto, it even turns spiritual things into carnal. It accepts superstition for religion.

Hence Paul says, in another place, the works of the flesh are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresy, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. Then, in another place, lifting it up into a churchly or religious point of view, he says:—"Ye are yet carnal, for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and division, are ye not carnal, and walk as men; for while one saith I am of Paul, and another I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" *i.e.*, in all these things, you are only following the bent of a carnal nature; you do not know the spirit; you are yet in transgression, and therefore in condemnation. Hence it is, that sometimes even in our religious matters we may be as worldly, at last, as if there were no such thing as religion. There are manifold intimations of this in Scripture, and demonstrations of it in actual fact. The carnal spirit, *i.e.*, the spirit under the control of carnality, is not confined to what we call carnal things. We carry that spirit from its own plane into what we conceive to be a religious plane. In other words, if we have only the lower nature; from any cause, if we are only carnal; then, we will carry that spirit through our whole being. Every man will live in the highest being known to him, *i.e.*, that actually experienced by him, for only that is known to him; so that a man's life, even his religious forms, are but a declaration of the man.

The whole object of the mission of Christ to this earth was to lift man out of his carnality. Being there, man is but an animal; worse than that, a suffering, sinking animal. Christ is come not to take any faculty away from man; not to change his being, in its organic structure, but to reveal his whole being to him, especially his higher being. When a man is converted he does not lose *anything*; even his old vices cry out to be retained. He does *not* gain anything except the vision of things that are, and a *desire to become what he ought to be*. Christ is come to tell w

of laws not yet known; laws by which man was more than animal, and might rise above the animal; laws which should lift him into spirit, and make him capable of understanding and enjoying the universe and God. The mission of Christ was a spiritual mission. He did not intend to reveal to us the various facts of natural philosophy; there was no need of it. Place the soul in harmony with God, and all philosophy, all knowledge, is in it. Get the kingdom of heaven, and all other things are added to it. The revival of true religion, of truth as it is in Christ, is the revival of every blessing known to man. The knowledge and practice of spiritual things is, hence, an undoing of carnal things, a reversion of carnal action. It is the practice of all virtue, grace, and excellence; it is, hence, liberation from the penalties of sin, from degradation, from a blind and hardened and unbelieving heart. It puts reality for show; simplicity for ceremony; truth for words; deeds for rites; action for creeds. It is emancipation from all that can enslave; and hence Paul says, in the beginning of this chapter, "there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus; who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." No condemnation, no penalties to pay to those who are in this spiritual condition of Christ, this harmony of law. "The law of life in Christ Jesus sets us free from the law of sin and death." No condemnation now nor at any other time. They walk in light, in freedom. Having the Spirit of God, they are sons of God. "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." You see heaven there. Redemption, sanctification, glory, are all in it. When you bring eternity and the universe to it, you bring a heritage of all knowledge, of all wisdom, of all happiness, of transcendent perfections. The secret things of God are there for us, whole territories of our own being now not dreamed of, are there for us; loves, affections, emotions; powers, capacities, and actions of which we have no conception, *are there for us.* There is not only no condemnation, but there is *what we call reward*—what the Saviour calls treasure laid up in

heaven—what Paul calls an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, eternal for us in heaven. You see it is not something arbitrarily created by God for a few; not something dogmatically asserted by the Scriptures; not something under any priestly or churchly control. It grows out of obedience, and faith, and love, as condemnation grows out of disobedience, and unfaith, and unlove. It is the crown, like the apple that crowns the autumn. You cannot withhold it from me; I cannot withhold it from you. Once in it, neither height nor depth, nor things present, nor things to come, nor life, nor death, nor any creature, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Now, Paul says, the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God. The Spirit is the truth, the essence of truth, the fulness of God; our spirit is the man, the essence of our manhood, our fulness of humanity. In a true spiritual condition, in this Gospel of Christ in Christ, there is a communion, a witnessing of both sides, one to the other. The Spirit of God witnesseth not by verbal revelation, not by unnatural means, but by the harmony existing between God's work in the soul and God's work in nature and grace. The Spirit of God witnesseth with the spirit of Abraham that he is a child of God—with the spirit of Moses, of Joseph, of Daniel, of Paul, of John, of Thomas à Kempis, of Jeremy Taylor, that they are children of God. There is love, and joy, and peace; there is first an internal experience and evidence; there is harmony, a scriptural, reasonable, catholic consistency; and so there is an external evidence confirming the internal. The evidence of truth witnesseth with our minds in science. When we believe the sun goes round the world, there is much every day that we cannot account for—much that is mysterious—much that we have to refer to unnatural and miraculous agency. But when we believe the world moves round the sun, then the seasons, all the phenomena of the heavens and the earth, confirm that *we are the children of the truth*. In the error, progress in truth is impossible. Once in the truth, progress is inevitable. In our

arnality there are a thousand things we cannot explain—inconsistencies which we can feel, but which we cannot define. That is one reason why in much of our religious worship there is much which annoys us, distracts us, but we cannot exactly show its inconsistency. We are led into follies, into doctrines which no Scripture nor reason ever suggested—into discussions, and envyings, and works of a superstitious routine—into what Paul calls, in the verse preceding the text, “the bondage of fear.”

But, in our spirituality, while there is much unknown to us, there is harmony between the parts of what we do know, a patient walking with God; a spirit opposed to lust and passion, to pomp and vanity, a spirit sustained under sorrow, under accident, under any providence or cross; a spirit of submission, acquiescence, humility; a spirit of holy desire, and hence of prayer and supplication—hence a spirit of love, and active benevolence, and usefulness—a spirit of self-sacrifice, of divine nobility, of Christ-likeness. There is the internal evidence and the external evidence. Wickedness does not abound, and nothing said about it. Vice and dissipation do not revel, and nobody shed a tear of pity over it. Law and science and all agencies for good do not slumber, and nobody draw them out, and wake them up and put them to their proper work. It is not all ecstasy, and self-complacency, and creed, and comfortable churches, and easy doctrine. It is not simply man’s own assertion that he has the Spirit with him. Men sometimes in very great error and unwisdom—sometimes in very great wickedness even—claim to have the Spirit with them. But it does not depend upon assumption or conjecture. It is soul alive. It is the life of God in man. It is the Spirit of Christ in action. It is heaven commenced upon earth. It is the kingdom of God set up. God’s will be done on earth even as it is in heaven. Truly born again, the Spirit of God witnesseth *with* our spirit; not merely to it, but *with* it, that we are the *children of God*; witnesseth not only to ourselves, but to the *world*; and this witness grows stronger as we grow older, till



the Christian's life is the pledge of his faith, and the day of his death his day of entrance upon a higher life. Now Paul says—if we are this, then what? Who shall tell? “If we are children, then heirs—heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ.” You cannot help seeing, it seems to me, the natural, the inevitable sequence here—the connection as between cause and effect. Nothing extraordinary, nothing arbitrary, is done here. God does not create a new estate and a new title for each child, something separate, something cut off from all things else. No; God is the fulness of all things. He is the heritage of his children. The universe is his, not only the heavens and the heaven of heavens, not only the worlds we see and the systems of worlds beyond them we do not see, but the beings in all worlds and all heavens—the grades of those beings, the laws which attach to each; the endowments, purposes, and uses of all; our own nature, the faculties we have, the responsiveness of all nature to ours; beauties for these eyes; music for these ears; loves and joys for these hearts; developments for these minds; peace in self-communion, and communion with one another and with God; the negatives of being, like pain and sickness and death, like ignorance and poverty and sorrow and tears, all removed; time no longer with its remorseless scythe cutting off our opportunities, but eternity inviting us onward to perfect consummation and bliss. God comprehends that. To see and know that is to approach God. This is part of the heritage. It has not entered into the heart of man to conceive it all. If we had never seen a man in the full vigour of his manhood, we should have no conception of manhood by looking upon a little babe; so from what we see here, it has not entered into our heart to conceive the glory that shall be revealed. They are God's children who grow into that: we are God's children only as we grow into that, whether in this world or any other. The degrees of growth in this make the difference between cherubim and seraphim, between archangels and angels, between the glory of one star and the glory of another in the eternal firmament. Christ Jesus is the fulness of God;

he knows all; he is King of kings, Lord of lords; the first-born above all brethren. For him all things are and were created—he is heir. We are joint-heirs. Oh, to be taken into him—into his spiritual, glorified nature—this is what God intended for all his children. This is what the forgetter of God, the prodigal son, loses, comes short of, is shut out from. God is not there at the death of the sinner to hang a new millstone round his neck, to appoint him a deeper place in a deeper hell. He would keep him back from the deepest hell, as he tries every day to do by all holy restraints and influences. But the sinner goes to his own place, goes to what he is fitted for, and what is fitted for him. He cannot see God, and love and peace, and virtue and glory, and they are far from him, and that is to be in the outer darkness—the darkness outside the presence of God. And so, believer, when you die, God is not there with a great crown and a long sceptre, and a boundless dominion that you know nothing about—because you have had a name attached to you to be his in this world. Peter's crown and the martyr's palm are not given to me, if I have only dreamed about Peter and martyrdom. Ignorance and worldliness, and self-indulgence, and uncharity, and all carnality are not rewarded with visions of exalted glory and powers of grandest immortality. No, we too go to our own place. If you go out and gaze upon nature, and know nothing about nature, then nature is a sealed and dead thing to you. If you go up and gaze upon God, and know nothing about God, God will be at an infinite remove from you. We must reap as we have sown. He that has sown sparingly must reap sparingly. The Saviour said:—When he came whose pound had gained ten pounds, he said to him, be thou ruler over ten cities; and when he came whose pound had gained five pounds, he said to him, be thou ruler over five cities. You will see all that you have eyes to see, and hear all that you have ears to hear, and be full of bliss as your spirit is capable of holy emotion. The things of that upper kingdom cannot be trifled with. The Saviour said they are not mine to give. He would like to give, but such is not moral being. You cannot give your

knowledge to your child. They shall be given to those for whom they are prepared of my Father, and the Father hath prepared them for those only who come prepared for them. He is no respecter of persons; so that there is no room here for dreaming, no room for miscalculations upon God's mercy; no room for the delusive unction of self-conceit. The estate and the title are in each child; new in each because each is new to the estate and title. The kingdom of heaven is in you, whatever of the kingdom there is for you. The heritage is infinite. The heirship is limited. We are every day making up the amount of our eternal riches, every day fixing the lines of our eternal estate.

And hence you see the naturalness with which Paul passes over from the idea of heirship and heritage to the idea of suffering with Christ: "If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." It is one peculiarity of the Christian faith that it is constantly practical. It opens no doors to wild conjecture. It leaves us not to mere dreams of the imagination. Paul has sent our thoughts roaming over the skies and piercing the eternities. He brings us back to time, to this world of strange vicissitude and mingled experience. This actual, present life, what of that? "If so be that we suffer with Christ"—it does not say, if you have been wholly immersed in baptism; if you believe a piece of bread to be a piece of flesh; if his or other apostolic hands have been laid upon your head; if you are happy and very contented, with plenty to enjoy and nobody to trouble you; if you are sick and poor, and the victim of wrong and evil your sins have naturally brought upon you; but if you suffer with Christ. How did he suffer? He was rich, up in glory, away from our world and all its woes. One woe of them all he did not make nor help to make; yet for our sake he became poor, gave up all he had. No, out of his true riches, in his true riches, in the panoply of eternal love, he came here and gave himself, gave thirty-three years of suffering and buffeting and contradiction for us, that we through his poverty might be made rich. His suffering was not the result

of mere providence, of necessity. It was a conscious, willing offering; he had power to lay down his life and power to take it again; he laid it down of himself. Have we of his riches? Do we see the eternal things he saw—the true glory of heaven-born love. What do we lay down? What do we give up? What of our carnal being do we daily crucify? What of trial, of wrong, of bitterness do we daily endure, quietly swallow down, that we might be like Christ? What of burdens for others do we take up? The poor, the ignorant, the out-of-the-way. What sacrifices of time, of talent, of means, do we give for our brother? How much good lives by means of us? What is the value of our lives? How much better off is our world by our Christianity? You see, it is not suffering that we cannot help which is to be reckoned. It is suffering which is out of an active, loving, aggressive piety. It is not the routine of our religion which is to come into the account, but the voluntary, practical, daily soul-action. It is not the absence of vice God wants in us, but the presence of virtue. “If so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” The one experience must be there, or it is impossible to have the other. There must be culture, or there can be no fruition. There must be the cross, or there never can be the crown.

Two questions press themselves for you and me to ask ourselves: Are we children? What are the evidences? This is a question in which we cannot afford to deal with ourselves lightly, or after the manner of dissemblers with God. We need to take heed how we stand. Suppose the light within us should be darkness—what we believe to be of the Spirit should only, after all, be of the flesh. And then, if we are children at all, to what extent are we children? What is the degree of our heritage? What treasure, how much of an estate, have we reserved upon the shores of immortality? How much do we desire a treasure in heaven? We go to great pains, run great risks, to make estates upon earth. What pains are we taking, what risks *are we running*, to make a great estate in heaven? There are *chances about our estates here below*. We may inherit some-

body's estate, or marry an estate, but there are chances of losing them too, and the certainty of leaving them; but there are no chances about that heavenly estate. It is absolutely certain, "if we are children," that inheritance belongeth not to another, and shall never be taken from us. And then I reckon as Paul reckoned: cost what it may, the sufferings of this present time are not to be compared with the glory to be revealed.

What is the little star that trembles in the water at night-time compared with the great world that rolls in space? What is a moment compared with all time, or all time compared with an endless eternity? The hire is worth the labour. The day will soon be spent. Let us suffer with Christ, that we may be glorified with him.

## THE CHURCH—ITS OBJECT AND CAPACITY.

BY REV. W. H. H. MURRAY.

*And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.*"—ACTS xvi. 5.

THE subject I propose to discuss is the Christian Church—its Object and Capacity. My more immediate desire is to examine into the status of the church as it now exists, and the character of public sentiment toward it.

The church, in its universal application, signifies the aggregate body of believers in Christ—faith in Christ, as a Redeemer from sin, being the distinctive characteristic of those who compose it; and all who believe in Christ as the Saviour, whatever may be their views touching interpretation and minor doctrines, are its members. This is the general meaning of the term.

In a local sense, a church is composed of any number of Christian believers who, from feelings of duty to God, each other, and the world, have consociated for mutual profit, and so that they may the better advance the kingdom of God. The church originated in Christ as the Pastor, and the twelve apostles as the original members. It was continued and multiplied by apostolic authority and labours, and has been constantly identified with all that concerns the advancement of God's spiritual kingdom.

It should also be observed that the conviction of all Christians, up to a very recent date, has from age to age most positively re-affirmed the Divine origin and sufficiency of the church. The current of Christian sentiment has set, I say, with an uninterrupted flow in this direction—that in the local churches, in the powers and functions, the agents and agencies, they represented, the world recognized an institution not merely begun in Christ, but all-sufficient to accomplish, so far as human instrumentalities can, the work of Christ on the earth. This, I repeat, has been, up to a recent period, beyond question the universal sentiment of Christians. The great impulse given to missionary effort near the beginning of this century—the Foreign Board and Home Missionary Societies—had as its prime cause this idea, that Christ held his church responsible for the conversion of the world. And it is this thought, ever present in the bosom of the churches which to-day holds them steadily up to the line of consecrated endeavour. This I regard a fair statement.

Now, there are two opinions growing apace hostile to this view of the church. Neither is as yet fully developed; one not sufficiently confident to express itself in words. But unless one of these opinions is checked and the other corrected, we shall soon see them both in the field in open and undisguised opposition to the church. What at present is only whispered in the ear will be proclaimed from the housetops, and an embarrassing and grievous schism will occur, the result of which no one can foresee. I will here present more fully both of those opinions, hostile as they are to the scriptural and hitherto universally accepted view of the uses and objects of the church—show whence in part they arise, what is their tendency, and how to render them powerless for harm.

The first opinion is this: that the church, although originally an excellent institution, and one which in time past has served moral interests, is now outgrown and left behind by the progress of events, and through the operation of its own past benevolent action has become useless and effete.

They who hold to this opinion are men and women of sceptical and so-called liberal tendencies of mind—people of radical and erratic temperaments, who by nature are inclined to reject and override whatever offers the least restraint to their latest-formed opinion or speculation. Many of this class have been checked and baulked in what, it must be confessed, were most noble endeavours for human advancement, by the slow and cautious movements of the church, or, perhaps, still more by its direct and persistent opposition; and they have naturally, looking at it from their point of view, jumped to the conclusion that the church is a cumbrous and uninspired organisation which has no sympathy with human wants, and is opposed to all needed change; and which, through its laws, ordinances, and ceremonies, and, above all, through its vast hold on human credulity and unintelligent reverence, blocks up by an unrequired machinery the path of just and salutary reform. They instance the attitude of the churches toward the anti-slavery cause in the early stages of its history, their present lethargy touching the temperance movement, the unwise and unspiritual conduct of the Presbyterian and Episcopal denominations in reference to those of their members who are most active in labours of love and efforts to give the Gospels free scope; and charge that, practically and in point of fact, the church prevents the accomplishment of the objects for which it was originally ordained. Furthermore, they inveigh against the spirit of caste and exclusiveness which exists in the church, shown chiefly in the construction of magnificent palaces of worship for the few, while the many have not the Word of God preached to them, and charge that even its activities are thus proved to be in opposition to the evangelization of the masses. They also urge that there is in the churches such blind adherence to old forms and customs, which every sensible person knows are practically of no value in our day—such timidity and conservatism in its worst sense—such bigotry and intolerance manifested in their refusal to receive any to their fellowship who cannot intellectually subscribe to their cove-



nants and human interpretation of Scripture—such opposition to science, which it thereby forces into antagonism to the Bible—that no enlightened, philanthropic, and progressive persons can conscientiously belong to them; and hence such must work outside, if at all, of their iron-like and ever-contracting circumference. They also declare that no latitude, no freedom of thought, no liberty of investigation, is allowed the preacher or members; that the fear, nay, the certainty, of discipline and excommunication with the accompanying loss of reputation and forfeiture of confidence and support, is held over their heads, and hence no reform can ever come to existing evils, because the very sources of reform—free discussion and investigation—are things denied. I might instance other charges; but these, in substance, make up the grave indictment against the church as an institution.

Here, then, is a charge, held, made, and discussed openly by many. Some of the cleverest writers of the country are weekly, in one form or another, reiterating it. Some of the ablest speakers are proclaiming it, now in the form of argument, now of satire, now of invective. Some of the best men and women of the land—if money given, if time devoted, if life consecrated to human good, are to be admitted as testimony of character—are believing it. And it is to be feared that numbers are tacit disciples of the doctrine, whom timidity, interest, or lack of occasion and prominence unite to keep silent.

Now, friends, how can this feeling be checked? How can we prevent this sentiment from going on and extending itself indefinitely? How can we take those elements out of the atmosphere which, if allowed to multiply and combine, will in some evil hour descend with the velocity and violence of lightning upon the organization that we love, and in which we believe the hope of the world lies?

Well, I know of but one way. It is this: the churches *must* henceforth so act as to make criticism powerless.

*We must put the church in such a position toward man in*

his needs, toward society in all its wants, that adverse criticism will have nothing reasonable to hurl against it. We must so act that any but malicious opposition will be possible, and therefore harmless. Our love for man, our efforts for his best interest, must be so open, so self-evident, like the sky at noonday, that no eye can fail to see and rejoice at it; so that even the blind shall bless the warmth of that beneficent influence the source of which they cannot in their blindness behold. The safety of the church lies in progress. It cannot become an intrenched camp. You can never fortify it that the world will not storm over its walls, and save it, as an army leaves an enemy's city, a mass of ruins. The church is not a walled city, it is a movable column, and its safety lies in moving on continually. Those who anchor it to a fixed position, who would wall it in with formulas, and moat it round with orders and creeds, are its worst foes. If the church does not lead the race, the race will walk over the church, and go on without it. Human advancement will not stop for any institution whatever. If any one should be foolish enough to array the church against science, do you think science will stop? If any against reform, think you reforms will cease? Nay, you must annihilate mind before you can check the progress of science. You must root out sympathy and human impulse and divinely inspired love from the soul, ere man will tamely surrender his inalienable right to expand and elevate himself and his kind. The prerogative of immortality will be given up only with the soul's consciousness.

The second source of peril to the church, the second sentiment that is hostile to it, lies, not in the opposition of outsiders, but in the scepticism of a portion of its membership as to its powers and capabilities.

Like the other, this feeling is in an undeveloped state. It is latent, or in its first stage of manifestation. Many do not suspect its existence, when in fact it has already become a part of their conviction. As in the case of insanity, the acts, and not the consciousness, of the patient reveal the lapse of reason; so

the actions, rather than the sensation, of many in the church testify to the lapsed state of their views and feelings concerning the powers and destiny of the church.

The feeling, I say, is evidently growing in the church, that the church is not sufficient in and of itself to convert the world, that some other organization must be raised up in order to reach the mass of men with the saving truth of the Gospel. For years there has been a growing inclination to work outside of the churches, as it is styled ; to build up other organizations, and make them independent of the churches. The idea has gone abroad, and lacks not advocates in private conversation and public conventions, that the churches are not adequate to the work ; that they are too unwieldy and inelastic to accomplish what the Master requires to be done ; that they answer the wants of a certain upper class of society, are admirable as educational institutions, but powerless to reach the masses ; unfitted, for instance, to do the work of searching out and assisting young men in our cities ; not qualified for the rough, wide-awake hand-to-hand work of converting souls. There is not a person of intelligence who does not know that this feeling is abroad and being expressed in manifold ways.

Now, I have this to say at the outset : if the church is not sufficient to carry forward the Master's cause, then something must be raised up that is. The cause must go on, church or no church. Souls must be converted, and if the church is not able, is not adapted, to do the work, then must it go by the board. No obstruction must be tolerated to men's salvation ; no half-and-half institution permitted to retard, even for a day, God's saving purposes of grace.

The question, therefore, comes squarely before us,—and the more thorough the discussion, the more satisfactory will be the conclusion that the public will reach,—Is the church, as an organization, able to go ahead and meet the obligations of the future, or must it be given up as a converting agent, and some other raised up to do the Lord's work ? This, when stripped of all merely accidental considerations, is the real proposition. For

to say that the church is to be retained when the accomplishment of the great object for which it was organized is to be left to other hands, borders on the ridiculous. The idea that the church is in the years ahead to be nothing but an educational institution, or a convenient agent for administering the sacraments, while all the active, soul-saving work is to be done outside of it,—all the zealous, consecrated workers to be beyond its direction and control,—is an idea which has in it, should it ever gain popular ascendancy, force enough to destroy the church and wipe it out entirely.

You can regard this as certain,—the church can never exist disconnected with active, aggressive conversion work. It was never formed for a mere educational and sacramental institution, and can never continue as such. There can be no such thing as a church outside of a membership; and when the active, working men and women who compose the church, and make it a vital and vitalizing power, array themselves under other banners and names, the church will cease to exist as a body or become paralyzed in influence. Its membership is to it what the breath is to the nostrils, and with the breath life departs. So then it is safe to say, that if the church is not to live as a converting power and agent, it cannot live at all.

I call your attention, furthermore, to the thought that the real force of this query,—what makes it dangerous to the church,—is to be found in the fact that it is raised in the church itself. It is not an assault from without; it is a revolt (I use the word in a modified sense) from within. The query has been started in the very circle of Christ's disciples. It is a hesitation, a wavering, a losing of heart, a desertion amid his own followers, and those followers, too, upon whom he has most relied. The divergence, amounting in some localities almost to a schism, is, I say, within the church itself, and the fair structure of her spiritual unity is liable to be rent asunder. There are certain phrases and expressions uttered in conventions, and going the round of the press, that serve to gauge the extent of *this sentiment*.

Now, bear in mind that words are symbols of ideas. They hold the same relation to our feelings as letters do to thought. As clouds reveal to the eye the motion of invisible atmospheric currents, so words show the drift and direction of otherwise undiscovered opinions. Words are teachers also. They educate a people. They are to ideas what colporteurs are to tracts,—they disseminate them from house to house. Words are missionaries of the brain; tireless servants they are, that voyage over all seas, climb all mountains, penetrate the deepest valleys, drawn as by an irresistible attraction wherever there is an eye to see, an ear to hear, or a brain to understand. Launch a word out upon the air, charged with the propelling energy of an idea, and who shall set limits to its flight? who tell where it will stop? The world of mind will never let such a word perish. Its pilgrimage is endless, and it will traverse the entire realm of thought and impulse. Like the wandering Jew, its footprints will be found on the shore where the equatorial ocean rolls its heated waves upon the hotter sands; in the snows of the far north the traveller will see them by the polar light. and where, as the ancients held, the sun cools the flaming wheels of his chariot in the western tide,—wherever man is, there will that word be, impressing men's minds, shaping their opinions, and serving the cause which sent it out commissioned as its herald. What men say is an index of what men think, and he who would know what public opinion will be to-morrow must note carefully the public utterances of to-day.

Now, if you search for the origin of this doubt and scepticism touching the church, its powers and capacity, you find that it is a stream that has two sources,—one of which is the lethargy of the church. The church, as an organization, failed to meet the requirements of the age, failed to improve the openings of Divine providence, failed to supply the more active portion of her membership with work. Active, benevolent natures tire of forms and ceremonies; their souls instinctively reject such dry husks, and clamour for richer food. They cannot be content with a dull, insipid routine of experience; they cannot see men

lost without making an effort to save them. The churches, partly from egotism, partly from timidity, failed to change their administrations so as to meet the wants of the times,—failed to enlarge the sphere of their activities, failed to bestir themselves for the salvation of the multitudes. The result was, that the zealous portion of their membership, especially the younger, finding no opportunity to work inside the churches, feeling itself repressed, fettered, intimidated, broke away from their direction and control, and struck out for themselves. If they could not work in the church, they would work out of it,—for work they must. The long-repressed, accumulating, pent-up water, finding no sufficient outlet through the ecclesiastical flume, broke over and swept away the traditional dam, and flowed whithersoever it would.

Another cause is to be joined to this; the mingling of the two, what may be termed the duplex cause, makes the problem intricate.

It is, as you know, in the nature of every organization to enlarge, solidify, and protect itself, and the more successful an organization the stronger does this tendency become, until at last it grows to be the prime incentive, the controlling impulse, and what was accidental and looked upon as a temporary expedient becomes confirmed, and takes the position of permanency. Personal energy, not entirely free from a questionable ambition, assumption of superior excellence, and a sensitiveness quick to resent friendly suggestion as a hostile criticism,—these and other elements of power go to swell the total of the tendency in question. This is the law. A hundred illustrations from history might be brought to prove it. Indeed, the best possible illustration is being day by day given in our midst; and many who little think it will at no remote period, unless wisdom prevails, be called upon to decide whether the church of Christ or another organization—an organization which at its inception was designed to be no more separate, no more independent of the church *than the Sabbath school or prayer-meeting*—shall *receive their presence and their labours*. For when the churches

shall lift themselves, as they are sure to do, to an acknowledgment of the wants of the age, and their manifest duty; when they shall reeve in all their sails, and spread them to catch the rising breeze of opportunity; when every hand and every eye is needed to work the ship, then will a voice go forth calling the wandering crews aboard; then must the gaily painted and newly launched yachts be left, that the ships of God may sail full manned whither the one sure Pilot may direct, and the wind-like Spirit waft them.

I have thus frankly discussed the two sentiments that are hostile to the church,—shown you the origin of each, and how you can make both powerless for harm. For one, I regard the church as above all human institutions. Its history is unique and sublime. Having for its foundation the words and deeds, the life and death, of the One Man, it has stood the shocks of time without being overthrown. Its walls are not of granite, yet have they stood when granite has crumbled. Marble and porphyry and bronze have yielded to time, but the passage of years has served only to confirm and strengthen the organization of God. Upon the church the Adversary has tried his every art, and exhausted his utmost fury. The fagot and rack, exile and death, have all been used, time and again, to break the cordon of believing hearts united by faith in Christ; but no assault of fire or sword has severed it. Without her ministrations the Word of God would have been an unread and unknown book. In her have been generated and grown those benevolent energies which have elevated and blessed mankind, and which to-day, with tireless zeal, are carrying the Gospel to every desert tribe and the savage islands of the seas. She needs no eulogy from any. I borrow out of God's free air no breath, I marshal no words of stirring speech, to sound her praise. Her wreath is woven, and well woven too, both flower and leaf.

## F A I T H

BY REV. DAVID SWING.

*"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."*—JOHN iii. 36.

THE proposition that the soul is saved by faith in Christ involves the two inquiries,—(1) what is salvation? and (2), what is faith?

Salvation must, in its final definition, be the rescue of the soul from that which is to that soul, or has been, or will be, a ruin. If there is a moral condition that may be designated by the word lost, then salvation is the escape of the soul from that condition. If ignorance is a loss—a ruin—then education is a salvation in that field; if poverty is a lost estate, then riches are a salvation; if mental weakness were a lost empire, the salvation would be found in a new genius, a new culture. By such illustration we may perceive that where moral depravity makes up the idea of lost soul, moral excellence will contain what is meant by salvation. Salvation of man, therefore, must be man's transformation from a sinful to a holy nature. It is a return of that which was lost. A legal salvation may be a preliminary or a concomitant, but cannot, in morals, be the chief salvation. In the financial department of life, a debtor can be saved by having his debts paid. Condemned to death, a



criminal can be saved by a letter of pardon having upon it the seal of a king; but in morals, a salvation is not simply a discharge from a debt, or an escape from a penalty, but a change in the spirit, a transition from vice to virtue. The term, therefore, draws its deepest interpretation from the term lost. If man is lost in wickedness, he is found again in a perfection of moral character. If my calamity is hunger, food is my release; if my soul's calamity is sin, virtue is my only rescue. In law there is such a thing as technical danger or technical safety. In the dark Kansas days there was such a thing as "constructive treason," a treason inferred from resemblance to real treason; but there can be no such thing as an inferential salvation, a constructive release, a technical escape. The meaning of the term is to be determined by its location. In morals salvation is spiritual perfection. The forgiveness of past sins, the payment of a moral debt, may be preliminaries, or attendant events, and may, by their importance, aspire to the name of a rescue; but these titles are the gift of gratitude rather than of fact, for after a man's sins are all forgiven or atoned for, he stands forth still lost, for he retains the low nature that produces sins and made necessary the pardon or the atonement. If to us, lost in a wilderness, without a sun, or a star, or a path to guide, there comes a benevolent hermit, a dear mentor, and leads us to the right path, and sets our faces homeward, he is at once our saviour; but our perfect salvation will come from our going that path. Our going and the mentor combine in the escape; and yet he lives in memory as the kind saviour of our bewildered hearts.

Pardon and atonement form parts of the great salvation, but the vast idea is only fully met and satisfied by the word righteousness. If a departure from righteousness was man's fall, a return to it will be his safety, the heaven of the soul. If this be true, then Christ is a Saviour in so far as he helps man back to that high place from which he fell in this career. The cross is only an essential prelude to the new life. The sigh of the suffering life and death of Jesus was only the solemn introduction

ion to a great melody, in whose music should be combined the many strings of a new soul and a new career. All of sin was then finished, all of holiness was then begun. To all Christians the cross should not be the only emblem of religion, but over it should be flung, or around it wreathed, the white robe of virtue, to buy which the cross was reared, and the life lived, and the death died. If salvation began at a cross, it ended not there. Its great result is reached only in the word holiness, for if in the image of God man was made, to that image Christ leads man back.

Moral perfection being the final import of the word salvation, the faith that saves the soul will need to appear on the arena as a power that will cast its possessor forward toward this perfection. If by sin man fell, it will be necessary for a saving doctrine, in order to merit such a name, that it shall possess some power to lead the heart back to virtue; and it should do this by some natural law, because a perpetual miracle may not be expected unless a constant force acting naturally is impossible. If the Creator works his will elsewhere by means of regular orders of sequence, and makes the rain and sun and soil throw upward all the grand flora of earth; if he makes the great central sun the fountain of heat and motion, so that all activity falls down from it in the great flood of light, so in the domain of religion it may well be expected that God will establish some faculty of the soul that will always push upward its moral leaves and bloom, or cherish it in its life-giving warmth. Religion impresses belief into its service, because belief is a permanent law of intellectual life. Faith is this perpetual natural force. It is not an arbitrary basis of salvation any more than sunlight and rain are an arbitrary basis of flowers. Faith in Christ is a rich soil of which righteousness is the gorgeous bloom. Faith is not imposed upon the human family as a condition of heaven, simply by the decree of God passed for Christianity alone, a despotic shibboleth *separating souls differing only in the ability or non-ability to pronounce consonants*, but it enters the gospel through the gate

of reason or universal law written by the Creator; a law that belief shall be the basis of all religious or secular life. The doctrines that must enter into the soul's welfare are based upon the reason of God, and hence are explicable by the reason of man. In the pulpit's fear of rationalism it has often made sad havoc of its supposed outfit of common sense.

Faith is the drift of one's heart and mind in morals. All definitions of it as being a belief in things not well known, or a belief in testimony, or in doctrines hard to understand, are wasted words; for children, to whom no doctrine is difficult, and with whom all is perfectly well known, and with whom distinctions are impossible, have an unbounded faith in God and in Christ. Faith is evidently the soul's attachment to a being. The New Testament is as wont to say, "Lovest thou me?" as "Believest thou me?" It sums up all the commandments by the word "love," and neglects the word "faith" for many a page. The followers of Christ so loved him, so gathered about his feet, Magdalen-like, bathing them with tears, that under the word "faith" we see flying along a spiritual sentiment, an angel of admiration and devotion. Faith, then, is the moral drift of the heart. It is an inner genius, ever growing, ever self-developing. It is an impulse of the soul, combining the two elements of a firm belief and a deep attachment. It is therefore both an intellectual act and a sentiment; for as when you look out upon the sea, earth, or sky, in admiration of the manifold grandeur unveiled, the eye and ear and intellect are busy gathering up the scene, making sudden measurements of height or depth, sudden perception of colour and sound, and after this rapid ingathering comes the sentiment of the beautiful, a deep joy, a great tone of heavenly music in the heart; thus Christian faith is both a perception and a sentiment, for gathering up the phenomena of Christ's life and death, reaching out toward his cross and purity and paradise and eternal life, it becomes a great intellect grasping a spiritual landscape, and *then* in the feelings that follow, of joy, forgiveness, hope, *repose*, it becomes a sentiment pervading the soul. It thus be-

the rational foundation of a new life. When the English standing in the vale of Chamouni, writes his hymn to the d mount : ”

“ Hast thou a charm to stay the morning star  
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause  
On thy bald, awful head, O sovereign Blanc !  
The Arné and Arveiron at thy base  
Rave ceaselessly ; but thou, most awful form !  
Risest forth from thy silent sea of pines,  
How silently ! Around thee and above  
Deep is the air, and dark, substantial, black,  
An ebon mass ; methinks thou piercest it  
As with a wedge ! But when I look again  
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,  
Thy habitation from eternity ; ”

after his intellect has caught the outlines of that vast dome  
ing far up heavenward, girdled with pine trees, and  
ned with clouds, this religious heart breaks forth in its  
t address to God. Thus faith is an intellect catching, as in  
rror, the image of a Saviour and a God, and an eternal  
; and then instantly it becomes a passion bursting forth in  
e varied beauty of a happy soul. From reason or the law  
od, Christ calls into service this magnificent mental action  
the basis of his new paradise. Infidelity is the absence of  
perceptive power. The magnificent scenery of religion  
not open out before it, and in the absence of this ideal  
d there is no up-springing of any religious passion or senti-  
t ; and a vast realm is blotted from the soul. It was my  
ppiness to journey not long since near a little blind girl,  
g rapidly through a magnificent country. But while the  
and forests were sweeping by, and while the sun was  
ting all the western horizon with his tints blended in  
ite delicacy, this beautiful child sat with head bowed  
ard the floor, the dear heart knowing nothing of the vast  
antry in the heavens, the banners of red and gold floating  
the solemn encampments of the woods and the everlasting

hills. She was cut off from a measureless world. Infidelity is thus the closing of a sense, and a veiling of a beautiful moral realm; and with the closing of the sense comes the death of a sentiment. Infidelity is the eclipse of a faculty total to the degree of the unbelief, and is hence not so much an insult to God as a natural blight of the heart. Faith is the discovery and enjoyment of a new world—the tendrils by which the vine grasps the oak. Faith saves the soul, therefore, not by any arbitrary decree, not by any form of equivalents or compensation, but by its natural action. It urges the soul along toward virtue just as the ground presses forward its embedded germs. The older philosophers make an expression, *natura naturans*, “nature acting naturally,” nature in its daily method. In the salvation of the soul, faith is “nature acting naturally.” There is nothing arbitrary in the decree. If there were enough truth—truth of morals and redemption—the Mohammedan or Buddhist system to save the soul, faith would be the law of salvation within those systems. It would be the intellect and the sentiment that would pass through those systems, gathering up their ideas and extracting their passion; hence the Mohammedan has surpassed the Christian in putting to death the infidel. Faith comes into Christianity thus not by an exceptional decree of God, but by the universal law of nature. The mind is so fashioned that its belief is always working out its salvation or destruction. As the ear is always leading the musician forward toward better music, toward a sweet salvation from the rudeness and discords of yesterday, so faith in Christ is always an angel leading the spirit onward, nearer to the condition that knows no sin or sore temptation. When the prophet of God commanded Naaman to go bathe thrice in the river, and his disease would be cured, the command was arbitrary. It was not an instance of “nature acting naturally.” You may repair to the same river now in sickness, and lo! there is no power in its stream. But when the Bible says, “By faith are ye saved,” the words come down from eternity, and belong to the human race in any century and by any shore. As long as

the ear may allure the spirit along toward melody, so long will faith unfold in the soul a deeper and more perfect salvation. It is nature, not toiling among rocks and oceans, but toiling in the soul; not a miracle, but a perpetual order of sequence. When God says, "Believe and be saved," it is not as it was when he commanded the leader Moses to smite a rock or stretch out a magic rod over the streams of Egypt. That was an isolated command. It was spoken for a day. When the command of faith was spoken, it was spoken in the eternity of the past for the endless years to come. As the idea of decrees does not originate in Christianity, but falls into it from the human mind, which always must think that God has decreed all things, and as the difficulty of free-will finds its origin not in the Bible, but in the mind itself, so salvation by faith is not a creation or invention of the New Testament, but is a law that has pushed its way up into the Testament from the realm without. In the Oregon coast one finds a hundred miles inland a flood beating along between walls of mountain height, wide, deep, and dark. But taste the water, and lo! it is from the sea. There is an ocean far westward, and this is only a channel cut by its mighty pulsations in the ages past. That faith seen in the New Testament is an arm of a broader, deeper sea. The nature of the human mind, the perpetual laws of God, are a great outside ocean, one wave of which has worn its way inward toward the manger and tomb of Bethlehem, and instead of faith's being an arbitrary decree passed in the New Testament, it was the basis also of the religion of Socrates or Aurelius.

In the transformation of the soul, two things are at once perceived to be desirable: (1) a new form of industry, and (2) a new form of being, called by theologians *good works*, and a *new heart*. But not aspiring to the honours of theologians, let us not affect their terms, but content ourselves by saying that our safety demands a better industry and a better soul. We must *be* and *act* like Christ. Our industry in traffic, in the arts, in the pursuit of pleasure, is perhaps sufficiently great; but in a moral world capable of virtue and vice, life and death perpetual, an

activity is needed of a holier nature. If this world were only a workshop, all might remain as it is; but being a realm of mind and heart, capable of great sin and great sorrow, capable of great virtue and blessedness, and being a vestibule of immortal life, it demands an industry of a peculiar kind, holy, self-denying, and affectionate. The education and christianization of the world are accomplished by the toil of one for another. Your Christianity is handed to you by your friends of yesterday. Your hymns and prayers, your music and your church structure, your taste, your language, were all wrought out for you by loving hearts that are now dead. You are the work of the past. As each child that now plays in its tenth year, speaking a language, singing a song, revealing a refinement, is only a result of a mother's care and solicitude, so the Christianity of your heart or your age is only a work wrought by hands gone from earth long ago. Each new life is born out of past works, as a rose's bloom is the colour of the light that fell upon it in the days that will never come back. Salvation, therefore, is the result of a holy industry. As the coral rocks, rising to the surface of the tropic sea, are the result of a myriadic life, active through long centuries, so salvation comes to its grandeur in this age by help of myriadic praying and singing lips buried now beneath time's old wave, and forgotten in its oblivion. By works of others are we thus saved. The impulse of this grand Christian industry is faith in Christ as the soul's Saviour. It has always been the power that has carried the Pauls over the *Ægean*, or the pioneer Methodist to the wilds of America. It has been the earthquake force that has heaved up from a bitter sea a continent of unfading flowers and perpetual spring. Each heart busy in any pursuit moves by a natural impulse. You know what the love of pleasure does; and you know what is accomplished by what the Latin poet calls "accursed love of gold." Beneath all activity lies an impulse, a motive. Under that vast movement called salvation—that movement which to-day gathers the Laplander to a worship, and makes the Sandwich Islands join with the angels in sacred song; beneath that movement which to-day is

he best glory of all civilization, under this vast renewal of the heart lies faith in Christ, the impulse of all this profound action. The least trace of infidelity lessens the activity; unbelief brings all to a halt, and damns the soul, not by arbitrary decree, but by actually arresting the best flow of its life. Unbelief is not an arbitrary but a natural damnation. Faith in the Infinite Father, faith in Christ the Saviour, faith in a life to come, lifts the world up as though the direct arms of God were around it drawing it towards his bosom. It is God in a law. You have seen, out in the summer fields, the beautifully-woven spider's web, with the morning dew glittering upon it, as though its threads were strung with beads of gold. But suddenly it trembles in every delicate fibre. The builder of it—the little owner of the lacework—has moved out, and, quick as lightning, all the labyrinth of silk vibrates like a harp-string. Society is spread out like this spider-web. Its lacework lies over continents, and the decorations of mind and soul hang upon it more gorgeous than any dewdrop beads of gold. Into this tracery are woven the strings of every heart that has lived or is living. But it is a poor dead fabric so far. But, at the first footfall of Christian faith, this vast network trembles all over with life, and, becoming as it were harp-strings, breaks forth into a divine melody. Without faith, life is a desert; with faith, a garden of fruit and flowers.

I said that in salvation two things are desirable, a new industry and a new being. We have alluded to the new industry that comes by faith. The idea of a new being will need only a moment's thought. You know of the fabled changes of the chameleon, that it assumes the colour of the leaf or rock on which it sleeps; but it is no fable that the heart assumes the colour of the soul nearest to it, not in space, but in love.

The Mohammedan child assumes the character of that mother who leads it to look to the sacred city and say Allah. It is thus the world through. The young men of Athens who in love gathered about the feet of Socrates were changed into his likeness, and he was condemned to death, that the public trans-



formation might be arrested. Thus are we all modelled by some character standing above us in reality or by the judgment of our affection. By itself alone each heart is a blank. The soul attached to Jesus Christ by this faith, which is both an intellect and a passion, is gradually transformed into his likeness, and step by step draws near to that salvation found in perfect virtue. In the face of St. John and St. Paul, and upon the foreheads of the Marys, one may easily see the likeness of Jesus, not in full splendour, but as in the early summer morning one may see the coming day in gentle outline, a radiance in the East. Thus faith is perpetually elaborating a new being, is separating the heart from its yesterday of sin, and bearing it toward its morrow of holiness, a law helped into action by a miracle, but yet a law. No other grace could so save the soul. Charity may do much. It softens the heart and drags along a train of virtues; but it is limited by the horizon of this life. Voltaire and Paine were both beautiful in charity toward the poor, but that virtue seems inadequate. And, of the highest form of charity, a religious faith is the best cause, and hence charity must take the place not of a leader, but of one that is led. Even penitence is a poor "saving grace" compared with faith, for penitence is not a perpetual impulse, but only a regret. It looks downward. It is not a grand battle cry, but a solemn requiem; not a Gloria, but a Miserere. Repentance is herself only the accident of a day. When sin ceases it shall cease. It is not the perpetual impulse of a long life. Repentance would crush the soul did not faith come with its wide horizon, reaching beyond this life, and revealing a world where there will be no sin and no regrets. Faith is the normal state of a sinless soul, a youth permeating all the hours from cradle to grave. Other ideas of Christianity fade before it. Baptism, Arminianism, Calvinism, play a poor part within the soul compared with the incessant beating of this wave. The doctrines of penitence, communion, and charity are the satellites only of this star, and are carried around by this great planet as decorations upon the outer border of her garments. As our central sun is equal to millions of such

worlds as this earth, as fifty millions of our moon could be poured into it, so faith in Jesus is a central sun into which we could empty all the countless articles of the one thousand sects. It is said that in some of the Scotch churches the articles of study and belief have reached the thousands, but into the one doctrine of belief in Christ as seen in St. John or Magdalen one could empty all the floating star-dust of this Scottish heavens, that dust-cloud having only in past ages concealed this sun of the gospel sky.

Not only is the individual soul borne to salvation by this influence, but by it all the conditions and generations of men are cast into a profound unity or brotherhood. Not only in mathematics is it true, but also in spiritual things, that things similar to the same things are similar to each other. The world looking up to Christ and becoming like him is brought into harmony within itself, and the distinctions of wealth, of class, of age, of nation, of sect, are obliterated by the great spiritual oneness of the deepest sentiment. Men are all equal when something raises them up above the distinctions of gold, of furniture, of office, and places them amid the things of the soul. Brotherhood is always created by a dominant sentiment, which joins in the great and annihilates in the small. A family circle in a palace or cottage is cast into sweet unity not by age, for one is silver-haired and one is in the cradle; not by learning, for one is in middle life, full of wisdom, and one is in life's morning, full of inexperience; not by genius, for one is brilliant, another slow of thought; but by a bond of love that runs through all hearts. Home is thus created by a single feeling of love. Thus faith in Christ obliterates the accidental distinctions of earth, and makes the tears of a slave and the diadem of a king come in one instant to the dust, to be alike forgiven and forgotten. That likeness to Christ is a transfiguration of earth, so that slave and king appear in the same shining garments.

St. Pierre, in one of his books, describes the return to France of a ship that had for months been beating about among storms in the southern seas. On a certain morning land was cried

from the mast-head. Passengers and crew gathered upon deck in suspense, and forgetting to eat or even fully to dress, they awaited in silence the unveiling of the coming shore. Vague outlines were seen which almost broke the heart by their equal resemblance to either mountain or cloud. After hours that seemed days, the look-out cried, "France! France! It is France." The scene that followed illustrates the uniting power of a deep sentiment; for in that hour of joy all took each other by the hand. They kissed their own and each other's children, the storm-beaten captain shook hands with his crew, and the richest gifts passed from high to low. All the miserable distinctions of humanity faded before that blessed vision of the beloved land. Thus the great sentiment of faith in Jesus Christ has power to obliterate poverty or sorrow, rank and bondage, shackles and crowns, and to reveal a human race standing heart to heart. They come up to-day from all paths of life; in all the long centuries past, from all nations they come; and in the future of this world the nations will come, and all looking out on a far-off coast, their voice has been and shall be one, but it is not, "It is France!" "It is France!" but, It is Heaven! It is Heaven! The storms are all over, and we all, led by faith into one heart, are on the shores of Fatherland—

With joyful eyes  
The spirit lies  
Beneath the walls of Paradise.

## Vintage Gleanings from the American Pulpit.

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As in the trial of some great personage the public does not await in solemn silence the closing of the case and the decision of the court, but irresistibly follows each witness and weighs the testimony each hour, so, in the progress of moral inquiry, one cannot sit down and wait for the end, but, by the mind's nature, is led along through a series of weights and measurements in succeeding days. There is no provision made in the mind for perfect repose. It is commanded us by nature to go on. Like the Wandering Jew in the fable, we must march, march, march!

WE do not say to a person of diseased sight, come out and look at the noon-day sun, and thus shall you be cured of your infirmity; but we provide the coloured glass, the dim light of the tallow taper, and by medicinal art and mechanical appliances, strengthen the eye that it may look straight at the sun; and thus it is with the dim, the blurred, and the enfeebled spiritual sight of the human brother. The supernal splendour of a direct vision of God would only dazzle his sight, and not illuminate his soul. It is only on stepping-stones of means and helps that the soul, darkened by vice and crime, can rise into a fulness of knowledge and communion with God. If we give to our erring brother a vision of the Divine in the human, knowledge of the seen inspires faith in the Unseen.

**SPIRITUALITY!**—This is nothing else than a divineness of soul, a rising above things material, gold and lands and raiment, and living for the soul in its relations to time and eternity. God is called a Spirit because there are characteristics in all material things which separate them from perfection. The word Spirit is the ideal for the everlasting. It is an embodiment of love, and of thought, and of truth, and of life, and hence is felt to be immortal. The spiritual man is hence a soul not wedded to dust, but to truth, love, and life. To be spiritually minded is life.

WE want to draw the sinner to God, and we seek first to draw him to Jesus as the most perfect type and sublimest expression of heavenly love; but if he is unmoved, we exclaim, "I must make him first love me; he must know and feel that my own heart is kind and good—that it throbs for him with that spirit of sacrificial love which speaks to us through the life and teachings of Jesus." I must show him by actual deed that this is true, and so if he be poor, we minister to such bodily necessities as will most readily take hold of his better nature and awaken a love for us through an appreciation of the kindly deed. Through us he learns to read aright and love the character and teachings of Jesus, and thus through an admiration and faith in man as God's image, he rises into a knowledge and communion with God himself.

CHRIST is not seen in childhood. All those eventless years of the flesh are passed by, that the mind may think of the Logos that came out of the infinite beginning. Joseph and Mary, the decree that all the world should be taxed, the manger, the wrath of Herod, the flight into Egypt—all fade before the eye that desires to see nothing else but a great Light coming in from the East to light the hearts of men.

THE glory and preciousness of the written word are in its being the vessel of such glorious treasures, the key that opens up the knowledge and the joy of God. It is the spirit, not the letter, that makes its transcendent value. It may be obscured by superstition, dogmatism, ecclesiasticism, the conventionalities of sect and system. Its sacred voices may be drowned or disguised by bigotry, priestcraft, intolerance, sensuality, and the pride of knowledge. In the hands of Pharisaic and legal righteousness, it may yield no quickening, life-giving food. But still it points the way to it. It unfolds the source of it. It bears the message of it to those who will hear. There, in the golden volume, the most practical questions of our existence are answered, the highest possible type of character and living delineated, human destiny described, and life and immortality brought to light.

## VICTORY OVER DEATH AND THE GRAVE.

BY REV. GEORGE W. BETHUNE.

*“O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—1 COR. xv. 55—57.*

THE sublimity of the text overpowers us. It is the exultation of an inspired apostle. How shall we, weak and imperfect Christians, dare to take words of such fearless joy upon our sinful lips!

My brethren, the apostle, inspired of God, speaks also as a sinner saved by grace. The truth which gives him all his courage, he preaches for our confidence. His conquering Champion, in the fight with death and the grave, “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” He exults as a Christian in God the Saviour, and he invites all who receive the gospel to join in his triumphant faith, when he exclaims, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!”

It is, therefore, our privilege and duty to make the words of the text our own. God strengthen us, by their holy teachings, to rejoice in the victory, and to utter the thanksgiving with our whole hearts.

The apostle has demonstrated the glorious resurrection of the just in Christ, by an elaborate argument, and states his conclusion as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy (xxv. 5), that the Lord "will swallow up death in victory, and will wipe away tears from off all faces." "So," says he (54), "when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass this saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory.'" His pious soul, with that faith "which is the substance of things hoped for," anticipates the full triumph, now made certain by the resurrection and ascension to glory of Christ the Saviour, the Life and Forerunner of his church. He remembers the promise of God by the prophet Hosea (xiii. 14): "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction;" and in a burst of eloquent exultation, he defies his former enemies: "O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory!" Thou hadst a sting, O death! "The sting of death is sin;" and that sting was deadly. "The strength of sin is the law;" but now is thy sting plucked out, and all its venom turned into life." "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

The natural division of the text, and that which we shall follow, is: The Challenge and the Thanksgiving: I. THE CHALLENGE: "O Death, where is thy sting! O Grave, where is thy victory!" II. THE THANKSGIVING: "Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Under the first head we shall consider the sting of death and the victory of the grave; under the second the Christian's victory over them, which will include an explanation of the intermediate verse—"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law."

I. THE CHALLENGE:—"Oh, Death, where is thy sting? Oh, Grave, where is thy victory?"

The Apostle, following Hosea, and by a strong figure, chal-

enges death and the grave separately, though, strictly, they are one. The victory of the grave is the consequence of the sting of death. It is a bold challenge to demand of Death, Where is thy sting? and of the Grave, Where is thy victory?

Where is the sting of death? Alas! and is it nothing to lie? Nothing to be made sure that we must die? Is it nothing to leave this fair earth, the light of the cheerful sun, our pleasant homes, our loving friends, and to be buried and become as dust beneath the sod, and under the shade of the gloomy cypresses? Is it nothing to close our senses for ever upon all we have cherished, and sought, and hoped for, and prided ourselves in? Is it nothing to have the sad certainty before us at all times, in the midst of our best successes, that the hour is coming when the cold, narrow, ignominious grave, shall hide us from them all? That our plans, contrive them and pursue them as we may, of ambition, gain, knowledge, service to those who are dear, zeal for our country and the welfare of mankind, must be broken off, and the brain which projected, the hand which wrought, and the heart which beat strong, become still as the clod, and the luxury of worms? Is it nothing that every step of humanity, the first tottering effort of the cowering child, the sportive spring of youth, the firm tread of adult vigour, and the halt of the old man, leaning upon his staff, is to the same vile end? That every hour of sleep or activity, pleasure or sorrow, thoughtfulness or gaiety, alike urges us irresistibly on? Is it nothing that the blood shall be chilled at its fountain, and the clammy sweat-drops start out upon the forehead, and the breath come slow, and in agony, and the life, clinging desperately, be torn away and cast forth by fierce convulsion?

Has death no sting, when we hold the beloved, who made life precious, and the world beautiful, by so frail, brief, melancholy a tenure? Has it no sting for the yearning bosom, from whose warm sanctuary the little one has been taken, never again to nestle sweetly there at waking morn, or for the noon-tide sleep, or in the drowsy evening?



Has it no sting in that "life-long pang a widowed spirit bears?" Has it no sting when the faces, which reflected our smiles, and beamed back upon us tenderness, and sympathy, and faith, are so changed that we must send them away and bury them out of our sight? Or when we follow the good man, the just, the generous, the friend of the sorrowful and the stranger and the poor, the wise teacher of truth, the advocate of right, and the champion of the weak, to that bourne from which he will return to bless the world no more? No sting in death? Is there one among us such a miracle of uninterrupted happiness, so insensible to others' grief, as not to have felt its keen and lingering sharpness?

Where is the victory of the grave? Where is it not? Power cannot resist it. The kings of the earth lie in "the desolate places they built for themselves." Riches can purchase no allies skilful to avert the blow. The marble in its sculptured pomp acknowledges the struggle to have been in vain. There is no discharge in this war for wisdom, or youth, or virtue, or strength. In the crowded burial-place they lie together, smitten down by the same hand. Obscurity affords us refuge. The slave falls beside his master, and the beggar is slain by the wayside. Some may maintain the fight a little longer, but "the same event happeneth unto all."

Where is the victory of the grave? What conqueror is so mighty, when all conquerors fight in its battles, and then bow themselves to death with their victims? The track of its march is cumbered with the wreck of fairest symmetry, and beauty, and vigour. The entire generations of past ages are crumbled into dust; all the living are following in one vast funeral; all posterity shall follow us. Were all the cries of those who have perished by flood, or battle, or famine, or fire, or sickness, and the wails of the bereaved over their dead, crowded into one, the shriek would shake the earth to the centre. Were all the corpses that are crumbling, or have crumbled to dust, laid upon the surface, as the slain upon a battle-field, there would not be room for the living among the disfigured trophies of the conquer-

ing grave, which, with the world for its prison-house, must consume its captives to make room for more. Where is the victory of the grave? The silence of the dead, the anguish of the surviving, the mortality of all that shall be born of mortals, confess it to be universal.

Yet, were there nothing beside this, the calamity would be light. A gloomy anticipation, a few tears, a sharp pang, and all would be over. We should sleep, and dream not; we should forget, and be forgotten. But there is more than this. Whence came death? Why must man, with his upward-bearing countenance, his vast affections, his far-reaching thought, the most fearfully made of all God's wonderful works, die? How came there to be graves in this decorated earth, which God looked down upon with smiles, and pronounced very good? My fellow-children of the dust, God is angry with us. None but God could take the life God gave, or dissolve what God has made. God has armed Death with fatal strength, and sent him forth, the executioner of a divine sentence, the avenger of a broken law. The victory of the grave is the conquest of justice over rebellion. It is omnipotence, putting to shame and eternal defeat the treason of man against his Maker. It is holiness consuming the sinner. Death is God's wrath, for his favour is life.

"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." Death had no sting for man, and the grave no victory, till sin entered into the world; but now "death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The law of God, which condemns the sinner, gives Death power to seize and hold him fast, with all the strength of God's wrath against the guilty. Wherever there is sin, its wages are death. Wherever death is, there must be sin. Yes! even in thy death, thou sinless, crucified Lamb of God, for thou didst bear the sins of thy people! It is enough that we are mortal, to prove that we are sinners, and condemned already by him who declares, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Does anyone doubt this? Let him solve the question why God slays his creatures. There is no evading it. Man must be a sinner, or his Maker a tyrant.

Here is the sharpness of death's sting. It is the evidence and punishment of sin. It is the lowering darkness of the storm of wrath, which is eternal. It is the hand of God tearing the sinner's shrieking spirit out of the world, and dragging him to judgment, thence to be cast down into pangs everlasting; while the grave holds the body in its unyielding grasp, till the Son of man comes in the clouds to execute his final vengeance upon each guilty soul, and its guilty instrument the polluted flesh. Oh! my readers, it is the bitterness of death, that pleasant as sins may be now, death will soon and surely come; and after death the judgment, when every sin shall find us out, and the sinner have no excuse, nor plea, nor refuge from the flashing terrors of the inexorable law; and, after the judgment, eternal woe for all the condemned, and a prison-house, whose doors allow no escape, where remorse preys upon the soul like a venomous worm that never dies, and the wrath of God burns in fire unquenchable. Oh! my God, what a strange lethargy must that sinner be in who feels not the sting of death, but sleeps stupidly on, dreaming of lust, and gain, and pride, till death wakens him with eternal agony!

Here we see the Apostle's boldness, the strength and valour of Christian faith; for, knowing that he must die, and the grave cover him, he stands up bravely, and flings defiance in their faces—"Oh, Death, where is thy sting? Oh, Grave, where is thy victory?"

To learn the secret of his courage, we must consider,

II. THE THANKSGIVING.—"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

This, with the preceding verse, answers three questions: Whence is the victory? How is it given us? In what does it consist?

1. "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory!"

God gives death its sting, and the grave its victory. So long as God arms and strengthens them, it is impossible to resist them. They are God's ministers, and in their ministry omnipotent. God, therefore, alone can give us the victory, by

becoming our friend. When he is our friend, his ministers, which were our enemies, must be our friends and servants. Thus the believer looks to God, and relies wholly upon him. If there be no help from God, there can be none. He hopes not to deserve, or earn, or work the victory for himself. It must be given him by an act of free grace, sovereign mercy, and redeeming love. But when God comes to his rescue, his deliverance is certain. Therefore he says, "Thanks be to God."

2. How is the victory given? Will the sting remain with death? or strength with the grave? If so, how will the believer conquer? Will God arm his enemies against him, and yet fight for him? Will omnipotence contend with omnipotence? or mercy deliver the sinner whom justice holds bound? Does sin cease to be guilty, or the law abate its force? Hear the apostle: "Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." Death is the penalty of sin, and, while the law condemns the sinner, he must remain captive to death and the grave. But our Lord Jesus Christ, by satisfying the law for his people, plucked out the sting of death, and ravished the victory from the grave.

For this the Son of God became incarnate, that, as man, in the place of man the sinner, he might be capable of suffering the punishment of the law, which is death; while his indwelling divinity gave to those sufferings an infinite worth. As God, he had the power to dissolve the bonds of death; but as the Redeemer, by his infinite atonement, he purchased the right to remit the penalty of the law, which passed death upon the sinner. He became man to suffer; he died that man might live. This the apostle expressly says (Heb., ii. 9), that Jesus "was made a little" (or, as some read it, a little while) "lower than the angels for the suffering of death;" and, again (14, 15), "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death; that

is, the devil (the tormentor of the damned sinner), and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage."

He stood forth in our stead, to answer all the demands of the law against us; and the Sovereign Lawgiver accepted the substitute, and laid upon him the iniquity of us all. Then, having for us honoured the law, by a life of perfect obedience, and infinite merit, he came to the passion of death. On the cross he invoked the death we deserved, in its most cruel and shameful forms. He stood between the venomed monster and us, and into his heart death struck his sting deep, so deep that he could not draw it forth again; and losing all his power to harm, hung gasping and dying with the dying Saviour, and died in slaying Christ. In plain words, he exhausted the penalty, and satisfied the law, and thus death lost all its strength to hurt those who by faith are crucified with Christ.

More than this, he demonstrated his victory over the grave. For though he was buried, and the stone rolled to the door of the sepulchre in the rock, and sealed and guarded, and the grave and powers of darkness struggled mightily to hold him fast, "it was not possible that he could be holden by them;" but, bursting the bars asunder, he dragged them forth, captivity captive, making an ostentation of his spoils, openly triumphing. Thus did God the Father own him as his Son, and acknowledge the penalty paid, the atonement complete. Thus did the Holy Spirit crown him conqueror, and anoint him Prince of Life. Thus did he show himself to the believing sight of his church, as their triumphant champion, Jehovah their Righteousness, and their "Living Way" through death and the grave, to the glory on high.

But the full manifestation of his triumph and ours, is kept for that day when the voice of the archangel and the trump of God shall proclaim his final coming to judgment; and all the dead, the countless dead, whose dust is scattered over the earth, beneath the sea, and in the very air, shall start to life; his redeemed, glorious in beauty, incorruptible, like his own

glorified body, to shine with him, his brightest trophies, for ever; and the wicked, who would not have him to reign over them, confounded and terrified by the terrible splendour of the once crucified Jesus, to hear the sentence of death, whose mortal agonies are eternal, and to be cast down to shame unspeakable, horror, and fiery torment, whose smoke shall rise for ever. Thus will our Lord vindicate his conquest over death and the grave by compelling them to give freedom to the holy bodies of the redeemed; that, as Adam walked in Paradise, body and soul, a perfect man, they, in their entire humanity, may enter the second Paradise of their inheritance undefiled, and that fade not away; and by making them ministers of his just vengeance upon the souls and bodies of all the wicked.

3. Wherein does our victory, through the Lord Jesus Christ, consist?

“Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The believer triumphs in Christ's perfect atonement.

By faith he is born again with Christ, and as Christ became incarnate for him, so is Christ formed in him the hope of glory. By faith he obeys in Christ, walks with Christ in his holy life, and through Christ honours the divine law, which before he had broken. By faith he is crucified with Christ—“I am crucified with Christ,” says the Apostle (Gal. ii. 20). Every drop of the bloody sweat, every pang of the lacerated flesh, every agony of the sinking spirit, in which Christ poured out his soul unto death, went to pay his penalty, and discharge him from the grasp of death, the executioner of the law's vengeance. For him death has no more sting. Death remains. Its precursors, pain and sickness and infirmity, remain. But their mastery over him exists no longer. He knows that they are changed. The curse is changed to blessing, the enemies to friends. Pain and sickness and infirmity are now God's faithful chastenings; not precursors of death, but of a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; and death is no more death, but life, life eternal, life exalted and heavenly. The grave has no victory

over him; for there he buried his sins, his sorrows, his misery, lusts, and vileness. He leaves his body there to be purified against the final redemption, while his soul goes free to exult where it can feel no shackle, no warring law, nor foul temptation. Thus he bears affliction with patient hope, as he would take a medicine with the certainty of better health, or submit to surgery, that an inveterate plague may be eradicated; and he calmly awaits the coming of death to unbolt his prison door, knock off his fetters, and lead him forth into purer air and boundless delight. The sting of death lost its power when his sins were pardoned; and death itself waits like a captive upon its Christian master.

The believer triumphs in Christ's resurrection. "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," says the apostle (Galatians ii. 20). He was dead in trespasses and sins; but as the apostle reasons in Ephesians, first and second chapters, he is quickened, together with Christ's body, by the same Holy Spirit, to a new and better life. He has a divine life in him. He is a new man in Christ Jesus; not in body, for there are natural causes which render its dissolution necessary; but a new man in soul, strengthened to bear the burden and resist the evil lusts of the flesh. Eternal life is begun in him, faint indeed, as life in a new-born babe; but, more than the earnest, the very pulsations of immortality. For this is the office and power of Christ, to give eternal life to as many as receive him; and this is the privilege of the Christian, even on earth, to have his conversation in heaven. Death has lost its power to divide him from God. He soars upon the wings of faith far above and beyond the gloomy barrier, enters the company of the church of the first-born, and listens to the harpings of innumerable angels. Is not this a victory over death and the grave?

The believer triumphs in the final resurrection. Christ not only arose, but ascended up on high. There the body, which was here bent by sorrow, has been made glorious in divine beauty; and the countenance, here channelled by tears, buffeted

and spit upon, is altogether lovely, the radiation of its smile, the fairest light of heaven; and the crown of all power, might, and dominion, is bright in the splendour of many priceless jewels upon the brow scarred by the mocking thorns; and heaven rolls up its waves of hallelujahs to the feet, in which the prints of the nails perpetuate the memory of the cross; and the hands, yet manifesting the cruel malice of men, are stretched forth to bless the countless throngs uttering praises to the name of Jesus, the Lamb that was slain.

As the Redeemer is glorified in his flesh, so shall the believer be raised up to glory at the last day. What then to him, whose faith can grasp things hoped for and unseen, are all the passing ignominies, and pangs, and insults, which now afflict the follower of the man of sorrows, the Lord of life and glory? Every revolution of the earth rolls on to that fulness of adoption, "when this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be brought to pass this saying, Death is swallowed up in victory;" when these eyes, now so dim and soon to be closed in dust, shall behold the face of God in righteousness; when these hands, now so weak and stained with sin, shall bear aloft the triumphant palm, and strike the golden harp that seraphs love to listen to; and these voices, now so harsh and tuneless, shall swell in harmony ineffable to the song of Moses and the Lamb, responsive to the Trisagion, the thrice holy of the angels. Yes, beloved Master, we see thee, "who wast made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour;" and thou hast promised that we shall share thy glory and thy crown!

"Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!" "Us!" And who are included in that sublime and multitudinous plural? "Not to me only," says the Apostle, "but to all them that love his appearing" (Tim. iv. 9). Ye shall share it, ancient believers, who, from Adam to Christ, worshipped by figure, and under the shadow! Ye *shall share it*, ye prophets, who wondered at the mysterious promises of glory following suffering! Ye shall share it, ye



mighty apostles, though ye doubted when ye heard of the broken tomb! Ye martyrs, whose howling enemies execrated you, as they slew you by the sword, and cross, and famine, and rack, and the wild beast, and flame! And ye, God's humble poor, whom men despised, but of whom the world was not worthy, God's angels are watching, as they watched the sepulchre in the garden, over your obscure graves, keeping your sacred dust till the morning break, when it shall be crowned with princely splendour! Yes, thou weak one, who yet hast strength to embrace thy Master's cross! Thou sorrowing one, whose tears fall like rain, but not without hope over the grave of thy beloved! Thou tempted one, who, through much tribulation, art struggling on to the kingdom of God! Ye all shall be there, and ten thousand times ten thousand more! Hark! the trumpet! The earth groans and rocks herself as if in travail! They rise, the sheeted dead; but how lustrously white are their garments! How dazzling their beautiful holiness! What a mighty host! They fill the air, they acclaim hallelujahs, the heavens bend with shouts of harmony, the Lord comes down and his angels are about him, and he owns his chosen, and they rise to meet him, and they mingle with cherubim and seraphim, and the shoutings are like thunders from the throne—thunderings of joy: "Oh, Death, where is thy sting! Oh, Grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Christian, death is before us. The graves are thick around us. There lie many dear—dearer because they are dead. We must soon lie with them.

I do not say, suffer not—Jesus suffered. Faith teaches no stoicism. But suffer like men valiant in battle, whose wounds, when they smart the most, are incentives to new courage, and earnest of future honour.

I do not say, weep not—Jesus wept. But sorrow not for the Christian dead. They are safe and blest. Weep for the sins that unfit you to follow them.

*I do not say, shudder not at the thought of death—Jesus*

trembled when he took the cup into his hand, dropping with bloody sweat. It is human nature to shrink from the grave. But I can say, Fear not. Now, it is your duty to live. When death comes, you shall have grace to die. Look through the dark avenue. Think of the good who are awaiting you at home, in our Father's house; think of the precious ones for whom you weep, but who weep no more. Fear not to leave behind you the living, whom you have commended to Jesus; he will remember your trust. Be ready to go where you shall not be unwelcome to your Father, your Saviour, and the family around the throne. There await the resurrection morning, when the family shall be complete—"no wanderer lost."

But, Oh! be sure that you are in Christ; that you are covered by his atonement; that you have indeed received the spirit of adoption, and have put on the whole armour of God. Then may you be sure of the victory.

But, Oh! my God, what shall I say to those who have no faith in thee, no repentance, no consideration? They are going down to death and the grave; yet they live and laugh on, as though they were to live here for ever! How shall I tell them of the sting of death? The victory of the grave? The sting of eternal death? The grave of everlasting fire? Speak thou to them, Oh! Holy Spirit! Oh, merciful Saviour! Oh, Father, pitiful of thy children! Turn them, draw them, compel them, to come under the wings of thy pardoning love! Spare them from a hopeless death, an unsanctified grave, judgment without an advocate in Christ, and the bitter pains of body and soul in hell for ever.

## THE CONSTANCY OF THE DIVINE ORDER IN NATURE.

BY REV. HORATIO N. POWERS.

*"And the bow shall be in the cloud : and I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth."*—GENESIS ix. 16.

THE book of Genesis gives a brief sketch of the Divine order of things in the history of creation, and of man in his earlier condition and experience, which, though imperfect as an exhaustive and scientific statement, is still a broad and solid groundwork of fact, and, properly interpreted, is consistent with the profoundest research and the most critical philosophy. What appears unmistakably is the gracious expression of the infinite Deity in the production of the universe and its inhabitants for a beneficent purpose—the fact that underneath all the phenomena which we call nature is the power and wisdom and goodness of God, and that the creature, man, is precious in his sight. What I desire to present to your attention is the stability of the Divine order in creation, the permanence of the Divine methods and government, which are all tokens of the infinite benignity of the Highest. Because it is declared that God set his bow in the cloud in token of a gracious covenant that there should be no more such universal destruction as that which had come upon the earth in the deluge, it is not to be

inferred that before this time no rainbow had ever appeared. If the sunshine had fallen on the raindrops previous to the date of the event recorded, just the same beautiful phenomenon had been witnessed, for like causes produce like results. What was emphasised by calling attention to its natural appearance was the faithfulness of God in the economy of his works. He would assure the mind of Noah and of his descendants that the gracious processes of nature should go on. He declared a covenant to the effect that no more such floods should inundate the earth; and no sign of his veracity and goodness could be more appropriate for a token than this beautiful child of the sun and shower. God says to Noah, "I will look upon it, that I may remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is upon the earth." There is something very touching and assuring in this language, for it bids us think that in the very production of what is so lovely to the eye, in the very doing of the thing which creates the admirable object, God says, "I am mindful of my promise; the very operation of my laws is the evidence of my tender and everlasting regard." Two different tendencies have been manifested by mankind respecting the wonderful operations of what is denominated nature, both of which are fatal to right views of the Supreme Goodness, and hence to our highest welfare. The tendency of primitive man, unenlightened in mind and heart, was to attribute all the darker aspects of nature—storm and flood, and earthquake and whirlwind—to a vengeful deity, or to deities who delighted to wreak their passions in fickle and capricious outbursts of violence upon mankind. We know from historic records how largely this belief obtained among the heathen, and how terribly furious these unseen powers seemed to them. With such notions of the government of the elements and the world; feeling exposed to the pitiless rage of wind and lightning, and deluge and fire and ice—in their dread and fear they sought to propitiate the awful gods, and deemed nothing too precious to sacrifice, if they might avert their terrible displeasure. It is easy to see that if

such a dark superstition should become universal, how discouraging it would be to all enterprise, how chilling and blighting to all cheerful views of life, how destructive of that effort which needs constancy and order in the divine operation for its basis; how, in a word, it would react with fatal power upon the character of man, making him capricious and cruel and bloodthirsty and revengeful, like the deities he feared and would conciliate. There is hardly a crime or an abomination that would not finally spring out of such foolish and dreadful notions of the phenomena of nature.

The other tendency, likewise injurious and mistaken, is to remove God altogether from his universe, to attribute simply to what are called laws the whole wonderful economy of the visible creation, as if these alone were sufficient for the perpetuity of the gracious order essential to the high ends of being. This tendency is greatly formed by the influence of one-sided scientific studies, or what results from a contemplation merely of one aspect of science. It is nothing which true science promotes, or for which it should be held responsible; for science, properly studied, is suited in the most impressive way to open one's mind and heart to the most effective disclosure of a present God. The disposition of many people, however, who acknowledge the existence of the Almighty, is to think of him as remote from his works, especially when the ordinary course of things goes on in nature. But when some sudden and terrible phenomenon appears, some great convulsion, some catastrophe that is destructive, then you note that the same minds that were quite unimpressed by the tranquil and regular process of things are quick to attribute the dreadful reality to the Almighty. For instance, the tornado careers over the earth, sweeping forests and villages before it, and tossing man and beast as autumn leaves in its path; the ocean is heaved up so that the tidal wave engulfs cities with their inhabitants; lands are deluged by rivers that tear away their embankments; the earth is parched by long and fierce drought; the thunder-bolt smites with its lance of fire; the earthquake

swallows the monuments of industry, and the lava-flow engulfs great towns in its burning sea, and the cry is, "Lo! the visitation of God." People pray for mercy, and it seems to them that the Almighty is near and terrible. But is he any nearer than in the soft sunshine and the vernal dews? Does he put forth his hand any more unmistakably than when he tints the flower or swells the pulp of the grain? Is his speech any more emphatic or significant than in the lapsing waters, and musical zephyrs, and the blue skies, and the murmurs of the fragrant groves? There is a strange unmindfulness of his presence and his power in what is ordinary and without startling phenomena in his works, as if he were not acting and speaking, unless by some astonishing token that brings terror and death. And a great many pious people come to think that it is chiefly in spiritual things that he is concerned—that it is almost a sin to recognise his love and goodness in the daily and regular operations of the visible creation. They seem to feel that it is a slight upon his grace to acknowledge that his goodness is expressed in all the common and ordinary things of life and nature. Of course the highest of all interests are the interests of the soul; but the soul is educated, enlightened, and set forward graciously in every way that God is allowed to deal with it. That is not wisdom nor genuine spirituality that ignores or depreciates any of the instruments of his love, or that slights any tokens of his presence, or the provisions of his mercy. The mind that is most open to the evidences of his glory, and which carries with it a consciousness of his loving-kindness and benign purposes, will be most likely to be devout and obedient. As I have stated, I wish you to think of the stability of the Divine order and processes in the world; and if we regard the character and nature of the Almighty as we ought, we shall feel that gracious assurance which will stimulate both our devotion and our industry, and hence be most productive of our good here and hereafter. God himself declares that he is the unchangeable One; and because he is God, the universe that he has made is ordered in righteousness, and has the elements of

constancy and permanence. The whole economy of things is most wise and good, and their phenomena can vary only in accordance with the principles which belong to the material of the universe. He has constituted the elements as they are, the ingredients of things of every kind, and, under like operations, like results will be obtained. Certain properties exist in the soil, the water, the air, the vegetable and animal kingdoms. The effects of these, under the same circumstances, do not change. The germ always sprouts, if the conditions are favourable; and the fruit ripens, the rain falls, the frost comes, the ice melts, food nourishes, and life expresses itself. There is no failure of anything after the same process, if the method is exactly the same. The same air, the same water, the same soil, the same food, always produce the same results, unless there is some different interference. There is exactly the same constituents in the particular mineral, plant, and animal respectively, and under like treatment the effect is the same. Gravitation, electricity, magnetism, chemical property and change, maintain their constancy of operation. It is so all through nature. So there is nothing that can be attributed to freak, to caprice, to chance, to any absolute disorder. All the changes, the perturbations, the discords, the confusions, the conflicts that appear in nature go on according to as certain a plan and as true an order as what we call the most perfect harmonies. There is just as perfect a regularity in the tornado, in the water-spout, the deluge, the thunder-storm, the earthquake, as in the vicissitudes of day and night, the flowing of the brook, the dew-fall, the expansion of the leaf, the growth of the child, the shining of the stars. What seem discords and convulsions in nature are the regular action of forces which are just as legitimate as the fertilizing power of the soil or the frost in winter. Our infirmity of right apprehension consists in the fact that we are unable to trace these forces as we can some others, and so we are often surprised and confounded by unexpected displays and awful phenomena. If we could see the influences which are gathering in the earth all through their

processes, we could calculate the earthquake as certainly as we can the ripening of the summer grain. If we had known, for instance, the exact state of the groundwork of the reservoir and the action of the water upon it, we could have predicted the inundation that swept down the valley of Mill River to a day and an hour. The same is true respecting the coming of the whirlwind, the tumbling down of avalanches and precipices, the liberation of malaria from the marshes, the descending thunder-bolt, the drought that blisters the earth till there is famine and death. The regular order goes on. The elements of matter perform their legitimate functions, but we are ignorant of a great deal that is preliminary to the disclosure and conditions that ensure the result. It seems to be one of the providential ordinations that man, with his gifts of intelligence and reason, shall learn to avail himself of the constituents and uses and order of things, and so make them contribute to his advantage. But he finds that the same force or element may be harmful or beneficial. The water which drowns and devastates quenches his thirst. The lightning that smites to death carries his messages of love around the globe. The fruits whose juices intoxicate to fiendish madness nourish and comfort him. He can make the fire his faithful servant or his terrible scourge. Out of the same plant he can extract medicine or poison. He can convert the same mineral into an instrument of life or death. But in all this contrariety of uses there is no antagonism in the processes of what he calls nature—no collusions or caprices or contradictions. The result follows the cause with as certain effect as the rainbow on the cloud when the sunshine gleams in the drops of the shower. The Divine order of things goes on. It is for man to employ for a nobler purpose the gracious arrangements of the universe. And the fact of the regularity and stability of the economy of nature ought to be a solace and an inspiration to him. If he should feel that the world is governed by chance, that even in the least things there is disorder and capriciousness, there could be no such strong confidence as is essential for earnest effort and



productive industry. But knowing that the operations of nature are constant; that the government of the universe, from the infinitesimal atom to the measureless worlds, is divine, and on principles that admit of no freakish fluctuations; that nowhere and at no time the infinite and all-wise and all-gracious God is absent, so that any possible chance can operate—one can have the very highest incentives to labour in the line of the good and useful, which are secured by employing the methods as ordained. But because of the inevitable sequence of causes in nature, man is not to think that there is nothing for him to do to make nature serve him, in new ways and with a manifold munificence. The crude material is given him, the great and marvellous forces of all her kingdoms are afforded; but he has to learn how to employ them, how to secure the service that is most beneficial. And he is constantly doing this; still he would not, were he not convinced that these gracious operations would go on. Without this confidence he would not sow his fields, nor build his home, nor venture upon the seas, nor adapt any mechanical contrivance to a special work. He advances in possession and power as he gets at the secret of the processes of nature which, when learned, never cheat him. Already he has made the waters do his bidding, in bearing his freights and in driving his machinery. He has compelled steam to execute gigantic labours in a thousand fields of industry. He has summoned the lightning to be his messenger, so that on the speed of thought he speaks to the ends of the earth. He takes the light from the stars, and in its colours tells the substances of distant worlds. The time will come when he will sail through the air with the swiftness of the wind, when he will call down the rain at his bidding, direct storms to different quarters of the land, and convert a great deal that is now, through his ignorance, harmful or destructive to friendly agencies and helps to his enjoyment. In saying this, I do not presume upon the Divine prerogative any more than by claiming the propriety of reclaiming wild and unproductive nature to profitable cultivation. No one thinks now

it is any trespass upon the province of the infinite Creator secure, by cultivation, the most admirable flowers, the richest grain, the most delicious fruits; to make the sun paint pictures, to make deserts blossom by irrigation, to mend speech of sight by surgical art, to predict the coming storms by the observations made in a hundred posts over a vast territory by scientific tests. And so it will be only employing the very methods of nature to make other achievements of a useful character, when the means to do so are sufficiently understood. In all these modifications of the natural processes, in all the efficient uses to which nature is subjected, in all that the intelligent will and power of man cause her to perform, he is making no essential change in the constitution of things; he is neither contriving nor enacting any new law, he is importing no new force whatever into the grand creation. He is only using nature in a way analogous to the use of himself. The sage only partially uses himself so far as the highest service is concerned. For how many of his powers are locked up! How narrow his capacity of insight! How meagre his knowledge! How poor the resources of the mind in the higher spheres of thought and endeavour! But the cultivated scholar demands the learning of the ages. He gives instruction in all science. He builds cities, constitutes governments, equips and directs armies, controls the forces of steam and electricity, converts the wilderness into a garden, and of the ore and tree yields implements that bring all the wonders and treasures of foreign climes to his door. But he only works in the line of creation, his aptitude. So in our management of nature, we are only bringing out the realities that are latent there, are only putting to service what is given and ordered of God. No one need think that the end is reached yet in the control that we will have of the marvellous constituents and forces of the universe. He has as wonderful triumphs to make in the future as have signalized the past. No one can put the exact limit to his achievement. But whatever he gains of good can only be in the line of nature; itself, can only be in accordance with the

essential principles and laws which are of God. In this direction his gains will be good, because God is good; for his whole creation bears the stamp of his benignity. And, as I have said, the inspiration of this effort, and to all effort, is in the sincere belief in the constancy of the Divine order in creation—the sure confidence that certain causes must produce certain definite results. The Bible does not hesitate to speak of God as creating, as disclosing himself in his works, as guiding man in the knowledge and use of the world in which he is placed, and as the present Lord who will not give his glory to another. And one very important thing is gained if we acquire a state of mind that recognises a present God, that is permeated through and through with such a conviction of the Infinite One as shall assure a calm trust in his unchangeableness, his infinite wisdom and love, and that shall inspire an effort of life in harmony with his laws and in accordance with his will. If we can only feel profoundly the fact of God near, and in all, and over all, we shall be moved, in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ, to live as becomes sons and daughters of our Father; we shall seek to find out all we can that may make the world we live in of higher use to us; we shall strive to conform ourselves, our lives, more and more to the perfect methods of God; we shall take the promise of God to Noah as to ourselves, and in every fair thing we see in earth or sky, in the bud and dew, in sunshine or shower, in the changing seasons and in all the marvellous growth and changes around us, we shall hear the promise of the Divine fidelity, the stability of the universe declared. Then we shall not merely think of the Almighty in the awful phenomena that alarm, but in all the courses of the world. We shall be taught to make useful the forces that, in our ignorance, hurt and destroy. We shall see that love is everywhere working, everywhere speaking, everywhere helping, and that it is for us to be dutiful and obedient, and so industrious, and virtuous, and holy. And looking for the perfect example, and for the light that shall guide us, and for *the Saviour who has made expiation for our sins*, we shall see

is, with his face shining with the brightness of the Father's  
y, and we shall take his hand and follow his steps, and find  
he love of his deep, true heart a joy and an inspiration that  
l enable us to do the works that are given us to perform.  
shall find in his sympathy a companionship, and the grace  
is atonement a deeper knowledge than Noah could attain;  
it will be our meat and drink then to do the will of him  
made all things, and by whose pleasure they are and were  
ted.

## THREE DISPENSATIONS IN HISTORY AND IN THE SOUL.

BY REV. FREDERIC D. HUNTINGDON, D.D.

*"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness."  
"The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."—  
GAL. iii. 6; JOHN i. 17.*

THE spiritual growth of mankind has proceeded through three great stages. Each of these has been marked by the evolution of one predominating element, or salient principle of religious action. On examination, we shall be able to discover an impressive correspondence between these successive epochs in the history of humanity at large, and the process of life in a well-disciplined, Christianized individual. This analogy is so thickly set with points of interest, as well as so fruitful of practical suggestions touching right religious ideas, and right living, that I shall let it fix the form, and be the subject of the discourse. That subject is: The threefold discipline of our spiritual experience, as compared with the threefold order in the expanding nurture of the human family.

The three Biblical Dispensations are types of three great principles of conduct, or rather three schools of religious culture, under which we must pass as persons, just as the race has passed in history, before we can be built up into the symmetrical stature of a Christian maturity.

I. First, was the dispensation of natural religious feeling. The race was in childhood. It acted from impulse. It obeyed no written code of moral regulations, but so far as its life was right, it either followed some free religious instincts, or else depended on direct intimations from the Deity, directing or forbidding each specific deed. The man chosen as the representative of this period was Abraham. The record of it is the book of Genesis. That writing is the first grand chapter in the biography of man; and its very literary structure—so dramatic in contents, and so lyrical in expression, so careless of the rules of art, so abounding in personal details and graphic groupings of incidents; so like a child's story in its sublime simplicity—answers to the spontaneous period it pictures. "The patriarchal age," we call it. The term itself intimates rude, unorganized politics; the head of each family being the legislator for his tribe. But, in the absence of systematic statutes, every man, by a liberty so large as to burst often into licence, was likely to do very much what was right in his own eyes. If he had strong passions he would be a sensualist, like Shechem, or a petty tyrant, like Laban. If he were constitutionally gentle, he would be an inoffensive shepherd like Lot. Such were the first two brothers. Cain's jealousy made him a murderer; Abel was peaceable, kept sheep, and the only voice he lifted up against outrage, was when his blood cried from the ground. Some of these nomadic people, having devout temperaments, "called upon the name of the Lord," we are told, like Enoch and Noah. Others were bloated giants, mighty men in animal propensities, gross and licentious, given to promiscuous marriages; so that presently God saw that the wickedness was so great, and the imaginations of men's heart were so evil, that he must wash the unclean earth with a deluge. But there was no permanent restraining power; no fixed standard of judicial command; and so, when the flood dried, the tide of sin set in again, streaked only with some veins of nobleness. On the plains of Shinar pride fancied it could build a tower that should overtop the All-seeing Providence; and it had to be humbled by a confusion

of tongues, scattering the builders. Even Noah, a just man for his times, so pure in that comparison, that he was carried over on the waves from a drowned generation, to instal a new one, had scarcely seen the many-coloured splendours of the promise in the rainbow, before he was drunken of over-much wine. Abraham himself, so full of trust that his trust finally saved him; strong enough in the power of it to lay his son on an altar; at an earlier age stained his tongue with a cowardly falsehood, calling his wife his sister for safety's sake—first pattern of politicians of mere expediency—and was rebuked for it by a Pharaoh, who had seen less of the heavenly visions than he. Sodom, with its indescribable pollutions, was not far from Beth-el—house of God. Jacob received a revelation from opened heavens; yet he over-reached his brother to appropriate the family blessing, and defrauded his father-in-law. Throughout the whole of this patriarchal era, reaching from Adam to Joseph, and covering, by the common computation, twenty-three hundred years, there were beautiful virtues, flowering into the light by the spontaneous energy of nature, but poisoned in many spots by the slime of sensuality. The human stock threw out its forms of life with a certain negligence, as the prodigal force of nature does her forests—as a boy swings his limbs in the open air. There were heroic acts; but they were dispersed over intervals, with dismal contrasts of meanness and cowardice between. There were ardent prayers; but foul passions often met and put to flight the descending hosts of the angels of God. Character needed a staunch vertebral column to secure its uprightness. No permanent sanction lent impregnability to good impulses. Even the saint, whose spirit rose nearest to heaven, walked on the verge of some abyss of shame. For though Abraham believed, Moses had not yet legislated, nor Christ died.

Corresponding, now, to this impulsive religious age of the race, is the natural state of the individual. It is the condition we are born into, and the multitudes never pass beyond it, because they are never renewed or made Christian. Morally, *they are children all their lives*. Bad dispositions mix with

l; one moment holy aspirations, the next a flagrant im-  
munity. What is wanting is a second birth of spiritual con-  
version. Conduct is not brought to the bar of a governmental  
condemnation, and judged by an unbending principle. Tempta-  
tion is too much for this feeble, capricious piety. Nature, true  
though, is always interesting; and spontaneous products may  
be cautious. But man, with his free agency, beset before and  
led by evil, is not like a lily growing under God's sun and  
dew, with no sin to deform its grace or stain its colouring; he is  
like the innocent architecture of a cloud, shaped by the  
artistic caprices of the summer wind; nor yet like the aim-  
less statuary of the seashore, sculptured by the pliant chisel of  
the wave. He has to contend, struggle, resist. He is tried,  
tempted, besieged. Satan creeps anew with every new-born  
sin into the Eden of the heart, and flaming swords are pre-  
paringly planted on its gates, proclaiming—no return that way to  
paradise. The natural religion, of which modern mystics are  
fond, and modern peripatetics prattle, is not enough for him.  
He might possibly answer in the woods, unless this feeble  
pantheism would substitute artistic ecstasy for worship, and  
light for the sun, that flashes down the glories of revela-  
tion; or in some solitary cell, though even there monk and  
nun have often found the snare of impure imaginations spread  
cunningly for it. But let the boy go to the shop, and the  
girl to school; let the young man travel to the city, and the  
young woman lend her ears to the flatteries of that silver-  
tongued sorceress, society; and all this natural piety is like a  
thin thread held over a blazing furnace. We may put our-  
selves at ease, fancy we shall fare well enough under so kind a  
heaven; come out comfortably at last; there is such a tender  
love in the skies. But the dispelling of that delusion will be the  
true word out of the throne of judgment—"Depart from me,  
I never knew you." No Babel of refuge will be built to the

No friendly intervention will avert the perdition of the  
sinner in the heart. No Tamar of custom will cajole with her  
flattery the ancient and everlasting justice. No thrifty leagues



of low and commercial instinct, postponing conscience to the arithmetic of traffic—no corrupt political majorities, subscribing patriotic manifestoes as stock for party or private dividends, though they be as eleven against one, and though they piously profess to be sons of Israel by church subscriptions, shall buy national prosperity by their brother Joseph's blood.

There is often a vague assumption that certain principles of natural right, evolved and compacted by ethical science, might save our social state. But, remember that society, without Christ, in its philosophy, its literature, its art, its morals, obeyed a law of deterioration and decay. Without him, it would have been sinking still. Instead of the Christian justice that hangs its balances over our seats of lawful trade to-day, we should not have even Punic faith; but something more treacherous than that—not even the hesitating Roman honesty, but a zone of restraint more dissolute than the Corinthian, and principles looser than the Spartan's. Instead of a respected merchant, or steady mechanic, going out to his business to-morrow, amid a public order that Christ has organized, might have been seen a barbarian with the concentrated falsity of a hundred Arabs, waking into a world convulsed with perpetual anarchy, or skulking away to transact his base affairs in a worse than Circassian mart. We may baptize the interesting displays of our intermittent virtue with a Christian name; but they may yet contain no quality of Christ's peculiar sanctity. They may leave human life quite untouched by that unrivalled glory, however bright their transient beam. They are not redolent of the New Testament. Their uprightness does not bear the sanction of the Sermon on the Mount. Their slender rectitude is not the principle that treats men justly because they are God's children, which was the law of Christ's great honesty. Their kindness is not the sweet charity of the beatitudes. Their moderation is not guarded by those majestic warders, reverence for God, and a Saviour's love. Nor is their worship, if they adore at all, fervent with the prayers of Olivet and Gethsemane.

And as the first dispensation ended in a slavery in Egypt, or

broods darkly over Pagan nations waiting to be brought nigh by the blood of Christ to this hour, so the lawless motions of every self-guided will end in a servitude to some Pharaoh in the members that cries aloud for emancipation—a settled alienation from the household of the good.

II. Next after this impulsive or spontaneous period, which is the period of Childhood, comes the legal or judicial—a second stage in the history of the religious consciousness. Moses, the lawgiver, is its representative. From this crisis, the chief significance of the world's religious experience is concentrated, for some sixteen hundred years, in Judea, and human progress runs on through the channel of Hebrew nationality. Other families have wandered off into hopeless idolatries. The religion of instinct has found its appropriate termination in a degraded Egyptian priesthood, mixing civil despotism with the incantations of an impure mythology.

And now, God calls up Moses out of this miserable oppression into the summit of Sinai, and appoints him the head of the second august human epoch. A period of laws, after instinct, begins. Instinct must be curbed, for it has done mischief enough. Impulse must be subjected to principle, for it has proved itself insufficient alone. There must be positive command, controlling wayward inclinations. "Thou shalt," and "Thou shalt not," are the watchwords. It is an age of obedience. Ceremonies and ordinances are set up to bring the wild will under discipline. And the better to secure exact obedience, a visible system of formal observances is announced—so many sacrifices every day, and so many meat-offerings, drink-offerings, cattle, doves, fruits, cakes, for every sacrifice. To withstand the surrounding seductions of nations still steeped in the vices of their natural propensities, a scheme of coercive restraints comes in. The people must have multiplied festivals, jubilees, national gatherings regularly kept, and by divine appointment. To draw them, there is a gorgeous temple with an imposing altar, a tabernacle, a covenant, a shekinah lighted from heaven, a priesthood clad in splendid garments, and all the superb

apparatus of a magnificent ritual. Even the daily habits, materials of common dress, qualities of food and kinds of flesh, are all to be regulated in detail by specific statutes. Law reaches down to determine the most minute particulars—the cleansing of houses, the shape of the beard, the sowing of the field—all having reference to neighbouring idolatrous usages, of which these twelve tribes must, by all means, be kept clear. And for the breach of every law, from greatest to least, there must be penalty. That part of human nature, that terror and dread appeal to, is addressed. On the transgressor woe is denounced. There is a Mount Ebal, full of menacing curses, as well as a Gerizim pledged to blessings. Smoke, earthquakes, thunders and lightnings, marshalling their awful pageant about Sinai when the law was given, only prefigured punishments that should always torment the disobedient. And, accordingly, down through all the Hebrew fortunes, while prophets were set to admonish and call back the rebellious, the great staple of Israelitish history was, the Divine chastisement that followed violations of law, and the prosperity that rewarded its observance. Sieges and campaigns, conquests and captivities, judges and kings, Joshua, Gideon, and Ezra, David, Saul, and Rehoboam—all were of less consequence, as events, or as individuals, than as instruments of that mighty, organised power lying behind them—Moses and the law.

So with all of us; there comes a time when we feel that we cannot act by inclination, but must follow law. The principle of duty is that law. Babyhood is passed, and its instincts suffice us no longer. To do as we like would still be pleasant, but it is dangerous and false. We become stewards, and must give account of our stewardship. Life has put its harness upon us, and we must work in it. Passions have sprung up, and conflicts have commenced within us that make impulse an unsafe guide. We find a meaning in that hard word must. We are free to do as we will, and yet we feel somehow bound under God's necessity. It begins to be evident that as sure as a stone falls or fire burns, sin will bring trouble, indulgence pain,

impiety remorse, dissipation disease, dishonesty infamy. The spendthrift must be pinched, the fraudulent bargainer lose his soul though he gain the world, and the false professor be spiritually damned. Here are laws—laws of the Almighty's ordaining—laws that bring retribution. If we would live peaceably, we must come under them and obey.

Very often it happens that by obeying a law, we acquire superiority to it. Voluntarily submitting to certain rules for a time, our virtue is strengthened and finally becomes independent of them, so that it can go alone. The inebriate binds himself by a pledge, and thus regains his freedom. The disciple appoints specific hours for praying, and by that means gains the devout spirit which breathes a perpetual aspiration, at last inaugurating a silent converse of the soul with heaven as natural as the pulse in the veins. The methodical division of time for business is only a form of law coercing industry and efficiency. Many a man has to spur his sluggishness by definite tasks, and many more would bring nothing to pass but for fixed methods and seasons. Without a morning and evening sacrifice, forgetful worldliness would render poor service to God; and memories like Martha, so careful and troubled about many things, would fail of Mary's one thing needful. The laying apart of exact sums for charity has been all that stood between some men and the doom of avarice; benevolence had to be put out to school, and philanthropy be drilled into promptitude like a cadet. Let us not despise law, for every day practical proofs are scattered before us that it is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ.

Even fear, though fastidious nerves are apt to discredit it as a lower sentiment, has its office in disciplining thoughtless and stubborn wills, breaking down pride and prompting insensibility, till it is ready to hand us over to motives of a nobler order. There is a meaning in a tradition of an ancient German prince, who, in early life, was bidden by an oracle to search out an inscription on a ruined wall which should prefigure his mortal fate. He found the Latin words signifying after six.

Supposing they revealed the number of days he was to live, he gave himself for the six days following to his hitherto neglected soul, preparing himself to die. But finding death did not come, he was still held to his sober resolutions by supposing six weeks were the interpretation; and then he prolonged his holy life to six months, and six years. On the first day of the seventh year, by reason of the excellent manhood into which he had thus formed his character, he had gained the confidence of the people, and he found the fulfilment of the ambiguous prophecy, by being chosen the Emperor of Germany. Here is a figure of common experience. We may conceive it to have been a more "spiritual" process that the prince should have been drawn to piety by loving goodness for its own sake. But it was the timid dread of dying that drew him, and the royal benefactions of a truly Christian monarch justified the agent. Have you never known a fever, or an accident, or the incipient symptoms of a consumption to be the determining cause that bent the whole current of a life from earthward to heavenward? Have you never known that a mere dread of punishment or pain, of hell or disgrace, has stopped the erring feet of lust, silenced profanity, driven back the Sabbath-breaker? God is not ashamed to take into the sublime economy of his purposes these stimulants to virtue; and let not us, in our peurile conceit, venture to pronounce them unworthy. Outgrow them if you will and can; but take care that you are not found, after all, below, instead of above, the plane of their influence.

For be assured, though we have read the New Testament, named the name of Jesus, and quite looked down on the Jews, some of us have not yet climbed up so far as to Moses and his Jewish law. In the Bible's older Testament there are needed examples for us yet. Not all of us have learned that majestic, unchangeable fact, that God is Sovereign; nor those related facts that, if we will perpetrate the wrong, we must suffer the penalty; that we cannot dodge the consequences of what we do; that indolence must sap our strength; that selfishness must **end in wretchedness**; that falsehood is a mint, coining counter-

teits that must return upon our hands; that hypocrisy to-day is disgrace to-morrow. This is law, everlasting, unrepeatable law; and our poor attempts to resist, or nullify, avail not so much as a puff of mortal breath against the gulf stream in the Atlantic. Blessed will it be for our peace, when we accept it, and bow to it, turning it into a law of liberty.

Remember that the grandest examples of sainthood, or spiritual life, that the ages have seen, have been souls that recognise this truth—the firm, Puritanical element, in all valiant piety; and without it mere amiable religious feeling will be quite sure to degenerate into sentimentality. We need to stand compassed about with the terrible splendours of the Mount, and with something of the sombre apparatus of Hebrew commandments, to keep us from falling off into some impious fertile idolatries of the senses. Holy places, and holy days, and solemn assemblies, still dispense sanctity. Our appetites have to be hedged about with almost as many scruples of regimen for Christian moderation's sake, as the Jew's for his monotheism. “We wish,” says someone, “that it was not so difficult to be good. We wish that we could be self-indulgent, and yet be good for all that; that we could idle off our time, and yet be wise for all that.” The worldling wishes he could combine his worldliness now with a heaven hereafter; the voluptuary, that he could have “the clear eye and steady hand of the temperate;” the vain, ambitious, capricious woman, that she could exhibit the serenity that comes of prayer. But Sinai stands unmoved at the outset of every life-journey through the wilderness; and, at the further end, beyond the river, Ebal with its curses, and Gerizim with its blessings. “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

III. But there is a Third Dispensation, profounder and richer than that of statutes; and, at the head of it, One greater than Moses. The period of literal commandments was insufficient humanity outgrew it. It became a dead profession, a school of foolish questions, a shelter of hideous hypocrisies. Lo! the enlarging soul of the race asks a freer, more sincere, more vital

nurture, and it comes. If the simple religious instincts of Abraham had been accepted for righteousness; if the law had been given by Moses, grace and truth enter in by Jesus Christ: grace for the heart, truth for the understanding; favour for man's stumbling feet, and light for his eyes. Christ does not abrogate law, but by his own life and sacrifice first satisfies its conditions. He says, expressly, "Think not that I came to destroy Moses, but to fulfil." The cross does not unbind the cords of accountability, but tightens and strengthens them rather. The gospel affords no solvent to disintegrate the commandments; it only lets "the violated law speak out its thunders" in the tones of pity. Divine laws never looked so sacred as when they took sanctity from the redemption of the crucified.

Witness now a new light, "lighting every man that cometh into the world." It is the deliverance of the heart. It is the purifying of the life. It is the sanctification of the spirit. The law, by which no man living can be justified, because no man ever yet kept it inviolate; which makes no allowance for imperfect obedience, and yet never was perfectly obeyed—which, therefore, is a rule of universal condemnation when standing alone—this stern, unrelenting law gives place to a gospel—gladder tidings—a voice that comes not to condemn but to save, a ministry of mercy, asking only a penitent spirit that it may offer forgiveness, and only an inward faith changing the motives that it may confer eternal life.

Law and Prophets, then, are not annulled; what they lacked is supplied. They are absorbed by evangelists. The gospel takes up all their contents, recasts them, and quickens them with the vitality of a fresh inspiration. Moses remains, but only as a servant to Christ. The decalogue still stands; but the cross stands on a higher pedestal, invested with a purer glory. Humble Calvary is the seat of a loftier power than towering Horeb. We must still be under discipline; but the Lawgiver is lost in the Redeemer. What was a task is transfigured into a choice. The drudgery of obedience is beautified into the privilege of reconciliation. Love has cast out fear. **Man no longer**

cowers before his sovereign with terror, but pours out his praises to a Father. The soul is released from the bondage of a thrall into the liberty of a child. Out of the plodding routine of mechanical sacrifice, it ascends into spiritual joy, where the handwriting of ordinances is done away; the Great High Priest has ascended once for all into the heavens, and suffering is willingly borne because it makes the disciple like the Lord.

Thus the word spoken by the third epoch of religious culture is not, "Act thy nature out and follow thy lawless impulses"—nor yet, "Do this circle of outward works, and then come and claim salvation for thy merits"—but, Believe, first, and then out of thy faith do the righteous works which thou then canst not but do. Repent of thy shortcomings, and be forgiven. Lean on Christ, thy Saviour. Love God, thy Father. Help men, thy brethren. And come, inherit thine immortal kingdom!

Now, at last, if it only keeps on in the path divinely marked for it, the soul emerges into that wide fellowship of Christ—that open hospitality of spiritual freedom, where the impulse of nature is only guided, not stifled by law; where law is ripened and fulfilled into faith. The highest victory of goodness is union with God. That union comes only by a Mediator. For reconciliation between finite and infinite, there must be a Reconciler combining both. The way to peace lies by Calvary. Humanity realizes its complete proportions, only by inward membership with him who fills all the veins of his living body with his blood, and the chambers of his church with the glory of his presence to-day. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

For, observe, by all means, this striking condition pertaining to the doctrine; that neither of these three stages, whether of the general or the personal progress, denies, or cuts off, its predecessor. Nature prepares the way for law—making the heart restless, by an unsatisfying experiment without it. Abraham saw more glorious ages coming than his own, and the promise given to him and his seed, Emmanuel accomplished. The law disciplined wayward, uncultured man, making him ready for



the church that was to descend "like a bride out of heaven" Every ordinance in its ritual was a type; every statute was a prophecy.

All Judaism was prospective. Moses looked forward to the Messiah. So, in the heart of childhood, there are expectations, vague and yet brilliant, of the responsible second stage of manhood; it is too thoughtless yet to look beyond, to the age of mature Christian holiness. But see, again, when that second age of stern command and strict obedience comes, it grows sober and reflective. It feels heavily that it is not sufficient to itself. It must look longingly forward for the consolations of the cross. Nature does not comprehend law, nor law gospel; Abraham Moses, nor Moses Messiah; but the Son of God understands all, and the gospel, in its majestic orbit, while embracing law and nature, transcends them both.

Remember, also, for its practical fruit's sake, this fact, that each stage requires fidelity in the preceding. You must have been true to the better impulses of youth, that you may be, to the best advantage, a servant of the law of maturity. You must be faithfully obedient to duty before you are fit to be a subject of grace. Do not imagine you can glide over into the favour of heaven, without first keeping the commandment. It is a strait gate, and a narrow way that leads to life. I must be a cheerful servant before I can know the joy of adoption, and cry, "Abba, Father." Willing to be constrained by the positive precept, I may hope, by-and-by, for the freedom of a child and heir. Many things that I would rather not do—irksome to the sluggish will, hard to the love of ease, offensive to pride, bitter to selfish pleasure—I must do, before I can ascend to that sublime self-mastery with Christ, where I shall desire to do only what I ought. You have seen a scabird, which in rising from the waves has to run some way with difficulty upon the water, striking the surface laboriously with its pinions; but when it has once lifted itself into the upper air, *it balances its flight with a calm motion, and enfranchised into the freedom of the sky, the slow beat of its wings is imperceptible.*

It is by pain and toil under the commandments, that the soul gets the liberty of its faculties; but when it has been taken up out of itself by love and trust, it moves in harmony with God. The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might "be justified by faith." But "after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." "All things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." No longer at Gerizim, nor yet at Jerusalem, but everywhere, we may worship the Father!

You have seen the religionist of mere passion. That impulsive temperament is, doubtless, capable of good services to the master. But, to that end, the master must have the reforming of it. That unsteady purpose must be made steadfast through a thoughtful imitation of the constancy that said, "Behold I go up to Jerusalem to be crucified." That fluctuating wing of worship must be poised by some influence from those hills, where whole nights were not too long for a Redeemer's prayers. That inexpert swimmer in the sea of life, now rising, now sinking, and now noisily splashing the waters, must be schooled by sober experience to glide onward with a firmer and stiller stroke. Ardour must be matched with consistency. You are not to be carried to heaven by a fitful religion, periodically raised from the dead at seasons of social exhilaration; not by a religion alive at church, but stagnant in the streets and in the market-places; not by a religion kindling at some favoured hour of sentimental meditation, only to sink and flicker in the drudgery of common work. It is to little purpose that we read, and circulate, and preach the Bible, except all our reading and all our living gain thereby a more biblical tone. And it is quite futile that our breasts glow with some fugitive feeling in the house of God, unless that feeling dedicates our common dwellings to be all houses of God.

So have you seen the religious legalist. In business, in the street, in sanctuaries, at home, you have seen him. In business measuring off his righteousness by some sealed measure of public usage, as mechanically as his merchandize, and making a label

or a dye-stuff his cunning proxy to tell the lie that some judicial penalty had frightened from his tongue; disowning no patent obligation, but cheating the customer, or oppressing the weak, in secret. In the street, wearing an outside of genial manners, with a frosty temper under it, or a cloak of propriety with a heart of sin; in the sanctuary, purchasing, with formal professions, one day, the privilege of an untroubled self-seeking the other six, or possibly opening the pew-door and the prayer-book here to-day, with the same hand that will wrong a neighbour to-morrow; and at home practising that reluctant virtue that would hardly give conjugal affection but for the marriage-bond, and that, by being exported to another continent, would find a Parisian atmosphere a solvent of all its scruples. Not descending, at present, to the depth of depravity, he certainly never rises to a pure piety. Whatever respectable or admirable traits you see in him, you miss that distinctive mark which every eye takes knowledge of as a spiritual consecration.

Engraft, now, on that "wild olive" stock, the sweet juices of Christian love, drawn from their original stock in Bethlehem, "of the seed of David and the root of Jesse;" soften that hard integrity by Christian charity; in place of duty done from sheer compulsion, put duty done from a willing, eager, and believing heart. Do this, and thou shalt live.

Abraham, Moses, Christ; impulse, discipline, faith; nature, law, gospel; instinct, obedience, grace; Mamre, Sinai, Calvary; this is that divine order—not bound by rigid rules of chronological succession, but having the free play and various intershadowings of a moral growth—to which we are to conform our lives. When the "Thus saith the Lord" shall have controlled our impatient will, our hearts will be ready to say, "Our Father, who art in heaven!" Seek, first, after that indwelling goodness that has its fountain in the centre of the soul, and good works will be the constant stream. Be children of light. Live by the spirit, not the letter; by faith, not by fear. For you are called to be disciples of Jesus. Henceforth the Christian is to be known, *and to be saved*, not by the hand so much as by the heart; not

by a righteousness that is legal, but spiritual. Let not your piety be the occasional piety of Rabbinical Sabbaths, with ghastly intervals of worldliness between, like isolated springs in a desert of sand ; but a piety, whose perennial influence, like the river that keeps the meadows always green, shall penetrate and fertilize the whole soil and open field of your being, and thus make glad the city of your God. No rich, or beautiful, or accepted life can be had by us, except Christ be its inspiration. Hope will not reach up to immortality, except it climb by the cross. Let not your lives be dead shapes of outward decency—the carved and gilded wood of an ark and a tabernacle deserted by the Spirit—but vital branches, filled with leaping and vigorous currents of holy feeling, on the living vine ! “For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

## THE GOSPEL NO SHAME.

BY REV. CHAS. S. ROBINSON, D.D.

*"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."*—ROMANS i 15, 16.

LOOKING, as we must from long education and habit, upon the religion of Jesus Christ as the principal source of human blessing, civil and personal, we can hardly appreciate the necessity of so formal an announcement as this in the text.

The Apostle Paul, in inditing a letter, and promising a visit, to the imperial capital, takes occasion to say he is not ashamed to preach a sermon there upon the plan of salvation as revealed in the Scriptures.

Very well : and we find ourselves ready to ask—why should he be ? We do not gain any adequate notion of the fine moral heroism he here exhibits, until we put ourselves in his place, as he was at the time when he uttered the words. The intensity of their meaning is centred in the mention of the city where the gospel message would be such a surprise. Let this simple declaration be written upon the dark background of Roman lordliness and lust, Roman intelligence and intolerance ; and then it will be flung into bold relief, and start forth into its own peculiar sublimity and power.

I.—It is worth while, for a few moments, to trace out these characteristics, before we seek to draw our lessons of practical good.

1. Remember that at this time the Italian empire was dominant among the nations, in actual supremacy the mistress of the political world. Throned upon her seven hills, that proud city, to which this most vigorous letter was going, sat loftily amid all the pomp of royalty and the pageantry of rule. The sway of the government was widely extended, as territory after territory, violently wrested away by fierce conflicts, was added to its dominion. It was questioned nowhere. It could work its wild will all across the planet, and no living thing would dare call it to render account.

Now was there no such thing as fear in the nature of this Apostle? You all know the elemental characteristics of the gospel. It never had any soft words for people in power. When it found a deceitful sycophant, it called him a hypocrite and a viper. When it discovered a false moralist claiming perfection, it did not linger to tell him, with many a *sauve* bend and circumlocution of courtesy, that he might possibly be mistaken, and so politely warn him off from some vague wrath to come. It publicly called him a liar, and asked him how he could hope to escape the damnation of hell. Indeed, when it detected wrong anywhere, it could not wait for the first blow, but struck it at once, and then struck it again—and kept striking. When it met pride, it rebuked it, and then rebuked the man that flattered it. If it suspected avarice, it charged on it its own essential meanness and folly.

Nor in those primitive days did the gospel allow its preachers take any hints of peril. If it aroused in the arrogant hearts it attacked any malevolent passions or angry malignities, it censured anew the very explosions it fired. In a word, here was a system of belief and practice, a scheme of logic and life, which ran counter to everything distinctively human, because distinctively evil. It did not wait for resistance or even provocation. It delayed for no formal challenge of war. It went straight up to

wickedness, and smote it in the face without a word. Was it not brave enough, then, in any man to say, "So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also!"

2. As to the vice in Rome, it would be difficult to find language of sufficient strength to describe it. With no power of control, no truly religious custom or principle, to bind the people to any firm standard of purity or right, the Latin empire became as luxurious as it was learned, as voluptuous as it was supreme. Nothing can be more pitiable than the patent fact that men used the very keenness of high education in inventing new means of pandering to the lowest kinds of licentiousness. The people were sunk under the dominion of dissoluteness and personal wickedness almost indescribable to decent men and women.

It is an adage, as old almost as history itself, "like master like man." The villas around Naples and Pompeii where the nobles spent their leisure were simply brothels of lust. It is perfectly fair to judge the empire in those days by its rulers, central and provincial.

Felix, governor of Judea, was living in shameless adultery with the Drusilla before whom Paul pleaded, in vice so conspicuous that the filthy magistrate fairly trembled when he heard the intrepid Apostle reason of righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come.

And Cæsar, on the throne at Rome itself, seen showily over the whole earth, filling the city with the unconcealed loathsomeness of his licentious court, was such a man as cannot be described. Hyperbole cannot even touch him. Invective has never been able to do his execrable character justice. He was a head and shoulders above all his fellows; and there were giants in those days. He was a monster of iniquity, He might have been mistaken for a fiend loose from hell. In mean malignity, and hatefulness incarnate, he was all that we think of when we pronounce his name for a hissing and proverb. He was Nero.

Need we pause, here again, to challenge admiration for this *fine show* of moral courage, when so sensitive a servant of God

declared he was ready to preach the gospel of Christ even in the capital city of such an abominable empire of sin ?

3. But we may move forward still another step, and note the superior intelligence of Rome. In the intellectual advancement of that educated age, the orators in the Forum, and the scholars in the hall, led the civilized world. Eloquence, literature, and science, find even now no worthier models than are furnished by classic Rome under Augustus and the Antonines. How do you imagine that a new religion, proclaimed thus far only by a few fishermen from Galilee, and urged now by a tent-maker from Tarsus, was going to be received by the pedants in the porches of that city ?

As for vain philosophy, and silly speculation, there was no end of it. From the buoyant character of the old Greek mind, we come at once in the history to the Latin comparative manliness and stability. We know Rome was in some few respects better than Athens ; and yet Rome was bad enough to command all commiseration. The precincts were filled with academies of science, falsely so called. Stoics and Epicureans vied in proclaiming the intangible merits of their opposing systems. These kept singing up and down the gamut of their inharmonious scales. Never agreeing, save in their hatred to what was arrayed against both, they made common cause, with mutual alliance to resist the attack of truth, and waged energetic warfare upon it.

Who has any idea that such magnificent masters in metaphysics as these could be prevailed upon to even test the argumentative claims of a gospel, the very first doctrine of which was that concerning the resurrection of the ashes in their urns into new life hereafter. It happens that the elemental characteristics of the New Testament faith are such as to render it always unwelcome to the learned and scientific. It puts such a small estimate on mere human attainment and power.

No man understood this better than the Apostle Paul. He had been educated at the feet of Gamaliel, and he remembered how little good it did him now. It was no embassy of compli-



ment his letter was going upon. His message would enter the schools of philosophy unasked, and thunder its censure. In the moment it detected intellectual arrogance and dialectic pride, it certainly would run directly up to it, and across it, and harrow it into strips, even though it rested upon the luxury of imperial patronage, and cooled itself complacently beneath the very shadow of Cæsar's palace.

Ah, indeed, it was a brave thing for a man, who evidently knew what he was talking about, to say—"So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also, for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."

4. But this is not all. We are to add to it an understanding of the intolerance of Rome. The laws of the twelve tables forbade and condemned all forms of worship, and schemes of doctrine, inconsistent with what we now term mythology—the standing religion of those days, when Jupiter and Juno, Venus and Mars, Cupid and Mercury, were deemed the deities for a human soul to reverence.

They did tolerate Judaism for a while, and after a struggle, in Judea, even after it became a Roman province. Paul had been reared a Jew; but the only reason for Roman indulgence of Hebrew faith was the utter inability of escaping the necessity of it. The empire was too large and too unwieldy for the authorities to keep armed forces throughout its length and breadth. Without these to coerce the nation, the Jews would not forsake their ritual. The Romans opposed it. They tore down the temple. They burned swine's flesh upon the holy altars. They crucified the priests. But all to no purpose.

Moreover, these mercenary conquerors were in want of money. All the world over, Jews were rich. And it was not long before the imperial treasurers discovered that to deprive the Jews of their old religion was to break them all down at once, put an end to their prosperity, destroy entirely their power of productiveness. So they lost the tribute. Crucifixion of *Israelites*, though exceedingly delightful, grew costly. Silencing *the evening psalms* at sacrifice was really the poorest of all in-

vestments of imperial energy, when what they needed most was mere shekels of gold. So at last they bore with Judaism, and sullenly suffered the robed servitors to proceed with the regular oblations. But they hated the entire system, and loathed its proselytism unutterably.

Much more, then, did they hate Christianity, and detest a Christian Jew. Judaism had age to recommend it. The Romans always revered anything venerable. But Christianity was new and unsettled, and in many places a little away from Palestine unknown. Judaism had friends. It had been for many creditable years the established religion of a positive nation. The people had clung to it, as the faith of their fathers, with a tenacity of hold, and an energy of affection, which of itself won a sort of regard. Christianity had nothing behind it. It was the faith of only a few, and they were not very steadfast. Judaism was grand and attractive in its external forms, and rejoiced in the magnificent parade of a splendid temple ritual. Christianity was severe in the ruggedness of its unadorned simplicity.

All these differences made the religion of Christians more distasteful to Romans than even that of the Jews, which they hardly endured. And over and above these, there were elemental peculiarities in it that forced it to run exactly counter to everything that was Roman in thought and feeling. In all of the various governments in this world wherein aristocracies hold sway, the popular sentiment is subtle and irresistible, that every movement must be judged according to the social and political position of those who organize and lead it. Now the Romans were told that Jesus Christ was the head, the sum, and the centre of this new system. And anyone had a right to ask—who is this Jesus? The answer would certainly give offence.

Christ was a Jew: even then had begun the mad prejudice of ill-feeling toward that unhappy people, which for so many long years since has wounded and wasted them. Moreover, he came from Nazareth: and even his own nation regarded

that village contemptuously, and made a by-word of it—"Can any good come out of Nazareth?" Moreover, he was of emphatically low life there, the son of a mere builder; and the Romans of all the world looked disdainfully upon those of plebeian origin, or such as followed a trade. Furthermore, he had no friends. His family disowned him. His neighbours tried to throw him down the precipice as a criminal. Even poor despised Nazareth for once forgot its nothingness, and erected its tremendous public opinion into dignity high enough to declare it despised him. Moreover, Jesus was now dead, and could in person no longer plead his own claims. It is always hard to apotheosize a hero who is actually in his grave, unless the crowd are led by another, a better hero still. Here the case was complicated by the shameful manner in which Jesus had been disposed of. Crucified between two malefactors, he seemed to those proud patricians as much of a malefactor as either of the others. He had met the most ignominious end a Jew or a Roman could know. And really, in all those early times, it was about as hard to persuade men to accept a crucified Christ, as it would be now to make them believe in a Lord of Glory who had been recently hung for treason.

These were all reasons for an expectation in the mind of the Apostle Paul, that any message he might offer would set on fire the intolerant rage of the whole empire. Judaism was bad enough; Christianity was unendurable. We cannot help being impressed, therefore, with the noble spectacle of manhood he presents, when he tells those people, I am "ready to preach" even to you, "for I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ!"

II.—It does not seem necessary now to lead this analysis on any further. Our lesson of instruction will be seen to be as simple as it is important. Are there none, in these days of ours, who get ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Feeble were its advocates then; many and strong they are now. Narrow was its reach then; the world knows all about it now

For more than eighteen centuries this letter to Rome has been read throughout Christendom. And not everybody loves it.

Do we never hear of new measures proposed—legislation, education of the masses, ingenious moral reform—all proffered as means of regeneration of the race, as if the old faith once delivered to the saints were dead? Why is this? Are our times better or worse than those? Is power more heavily intrenched? Is vice more violent? Is learning more audacious? Is even scepticism more intolerant? Is there any reason for a parliamentary vote, through a frightened Christendom, of want of confidence in the gospel of Jesus?

For remember Paul succeeded at Rome. He established a fine church there. He had saints even in Cæsar's household. That "man of three cubits height," as Chrysostom calls him, "became tall enough to touch the third heaven." He made his message to sound in their ears with the loftiness of Isaiah, the devotion of David, the vehemence of the haggard Ezekiel, and the sublimity of John: and over and above these, with a stroke and a ring that was his own, which, while it comprehended them all, transcended them all, and gave to his form of address a living energy and power that has never found its equal in the teachings of man. There was no secret in all this. Paul was a preacher of such lightning and flame, simply because he bore as the burden of his embassy a gospel which itself was fire.

Oh, let the church of the living God learn here her lesson! A pure gospel is the instrument of her working, and the insurer of her success. The growth of the cause at Rome was only the type of all true growth in the earthly kingdom of God. Rome has fallen from her seven hills, and all the trophies of her former greatness have faded: even the memories of her glory have "gone glimmering back amid the dream of things that were." And Paul, too, lies silent in his martyrrest, and no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. But his theme of speech, his instrument of mastery, yet lives.

The gospel is "still achieving, still pursuing." And empire yields to the mightier powers that be, when a soul is truly converted unto God.

While the world stands, and poor weak human nature continues to be what it is, I suppose, there will always be those who shrink away from the constant reiteration of the invitation which God has sent to our dying race. Some ribald tongue has given a nick-name to evangelical preachers; he says they belong to the—come, poor sinner, come—style of orators. Well—is there any need of entering violent denial of that? Is it best to be quite ashamed of the gospel of Christ? Yet ministers take many a predilection, consciously or unconsciously, from their audiences. If our churches become tired of hearing their preachers say—come, poor sinner, come—it is quite possible the preachers will say it less; and meantime less of the sinners will come.

It behoves the churches to stand by us in the simplicities of the faith. Men are just Romans everywhere; and the same spirit which Paul had to meet is found where we dwell. Call it by what name you will, it is as intolerant and uncompromising as ever. People do not like to hear about Christ crucified to save miserable sinners. And yet that truth was what did the work in Rome. They wish discussions concerning Geology and Genesis—disquisitions about the intermediate state—arguments as to the Bible in the common schools—and essays disclosing methods of high moral culture—with now and then a patriotic oration on the eve of a parade.

If the churches second this demand, the men in the pulpits are human; and the standard of gospel fidelity will be perilously lowered. By-and-by the clamour will force its purpose, and a new and willing babbler will come at the call. Then the ordinary ministrations of the sanctuary will be like the entertainments of a Lyceum. The crowd will applaud, the choirs will sing, the players on instruments will be there. But the days will pass harvestless and unprospered.

*But once let the mind and the heart of the church be filled*

with anxiety for souls, and the ministry will be held up to its work. For this we need, all alike and together, to pray more and labour more in fraternal counsel with each other. In the air around us we must learn, like soldiers on a battlefield, to distinguish between the sweet sighings of the forest, soothing us to sleep, and the awful cries of pain uttered by our wounded comrades dying in the midnight. Oh! for more spirituality in our life, more fervour in our speech, more confidence in our message, more glorying in the cross of Christ!

Talk about a minister's taking charge of a new church! Believe me, in a very important sense, the church takes charge of a minister also. He becomes very much oftentimes what he thinks his congregation want him to be. You are to crowd him him up, therefore, to his duty. Be sure he knows you want to hear the old, old story. Demand of him, by your silent satisfaction, that he shall never be ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Cause him to understand that there can never be any possible peace or place for him, by night or by day, unless he proclaims the glad news of salvation to perishing souls. Speak to him less of Whitefield's eloquence, and more of Baxter's anxiety.

Ah! think of it! What words those are of Richard Baxter, for a preacher to ponder:—"The Lord knows I am ashamed of every sermon I preach, when I think what I have been speaking of, and who sent me, and that men's salvation or damnation is so much concerned in it. I am ready to tremble lest God should judge me as a sligher of his truths, and of the souls of men; and lest in my best sermon, I should be guilty of their blood!" Wise alarm, indeed, is this. He who works under its pressure cannot fail to be a more thoughtful man.

There is no city so grand, no audience so intellectual, no community so cultured, as to have outgrown its need for a pure gospel earnestly and faithfully presented. I am well aware how pitifully like bathos and anti-climax it seems, for him who now speaks, to quote, as his inaugural announcement, these words of the great Apostle. And yet, if you will take the entire verse together, you will note that there is an exceedingly

elastic form of expression in it, which relieves me of presumption. Paul said, "as much as in me is." Anybody can say that who knows his work as a minister.

When this same apostle told the Corinthians that it had pleased God to save them which believe "by the foolishness of preaching," he did not by any means desire them to understand that preaching would become more Scriptural or more effective in proportion as it became more weak, more diluted, or more sensationally silly. One does not necessarily grow more puerile or foolish by growing more simple. It is not even possible for a preacher to be foolish or tame, as long as his sermons contain the full, true gospel, in its close relations to his hearers and himself.

I cannot conceive it my office to pursue phantoms, or hunt after shadows. To lift Christian faith, and to convert souls, is my errand, from this day forward—the same I have cherished through these years.

Sometimes men become errorists and fanatics by merely condescending to meet such in conflict. I conceive that our pulpits at the present day have higher aims than this, and safer tasks. The air in the enchanted ground of speculative inquiry is bewildering and full of intoxication. It will not do to let license have its own way, when short logic can resist it. But the chase need not go far into the shadows. Some dangers may tranquilly be left to Providence to avert. The deep things of God, the sublime mysteries of his dealing with men, the far-off and dim realities of the future world—all of these will keep if we let them alone for the leisure of eternity. It were well for us if we were never called upon to forsake the plain of our own level, but could stand still before these great revelations of divine mystery, which loom up like mountains in the distance; and recognizing their position, gaze reverently upon their majestic proportions, yet leave them alone, unexplored though acknowledged, with their summits wrapped in clouds.

Still, if unabashed Error clambers up, should not Truth follow fearlessly, even though she wears, like the prophet, her reverent

veil? Yes—sometimes. But let not even Truth exceed her mission. If the unhallowed footstep dares to enter the cloud-presence unbidden, then let Truth cover her eyes from the blaze, and return. Jehovah will vindicate his own upon the mount that should not be touched!

Oh, that the days might return to the church, when God's Spirit acknowledged his own message, and accompanied his own word! Oh, that there might come a baptism upon the ministry and the people, which should fill them with the Holy Ghost, which should humble pride and hush reinless ambition; which should curb the unhallowed intellect, and check shadowy speculation, and make us all better satisfied with the clear faith of the fathers, and the simple themes of the gospel! Then would the Sun of righteousness rise upon us with healing in his wings. Then would all darkness flee away, and not a shadow rest upon the path along which God's kingdom is coming—save now and then the shadow of the Great Rock in a weary land!



## THE COMMON HUMANITY

BY REV. CHAS. S. ROBINSON, D.D.

*"The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all."*—  
PROVERBS xxii. : 2.

**A**MONG all the distinctions we meet in daily life, those produced and fostered by wealth are the most frequent and most inveterate. Gold makes the foolish man wise, and the weak man influential. There is no consideration for a poor philosopher, there is no beauty to a dowerless maid. "The rich man's wealth is his strong city; the destruction of the poor is their poverty."

So says this wise hard world. Hence the text surprises us, when heard for the first time. Everybody knows it must be a quotation. Most persons would quite shrewdly conjecture that it came from the Bible, which has a habit of saying such impracticable things. It seems slightly agrarian. It appears as if it might work revolution, if injudiciously handled.

We can more easily deal with and even reconcile all other differences among us than these. Men are unlike in stature. But talents are respected. Napoleon Bonaparte and Isaac Watts were both men of smallest size. Men are unlike also in gifts. The intellect ranges all along the scale from the weakling to the sage. But moral worth is respected. And we receive the histories written by our fathers, and peruse in reverent regard the books of science compiled in the ages which have gone. We always have some way of relieving the anomaly. George

Washington was neither learned nor intellectual; and Richard the Lion-hearted could hardly sign his own name.

So in many other particulars; we differ, but we agree. But in the matter of mere riches we agree to differ. The possession of a large or small estate fixes chasms of division in our ordinary association, at times, almost as impassable as that between Dives and Lazarus in the other world.

Against all this, Christianity is diligently striving. It asserts that there is one line of common humanity running through the race. Our text is an embodiment of the whole Bible on this point. Let us come to the study of it unprejudiced. Let us light up its meaning a little with a few illustrations. Then you will see it is the plainest sort of truth.

1. In the first place, let us remark that the rich and poor meet together in their ordinary allotments of life.

That is to say, all these surroundings of competence or narrowness, luxury or necessity, everything indeed by which the fact is determined as to whether they are to be reckoned rich or poor, are settled by one common Arbiter and Sovereign of them all.

I suppose there are some people who will always need reminding that there is no such thing as chance in human affairs. The usual apportionments of privilege are oftentimes singularly and mysteriously adjusted among men. But "the Lord is the maker of them all." That is, he not only created them all, but he dowered them all. He made one man rich and another man poor. We have one Father, but the children are not all alike. It is not money which is the root of all evil. Inspiration never said that. It is the sinful love of money which has done all the mischief. That, God never gave any man. Divine wisdom has constituted human society pretty much in essential things what it is. But the perverse ingenuity of fallen man has quite disturbed many of the balances and compensations.

Some matters are better as they are. These grades of possession, divine wisdom has established from the beginning. There is not a trace or evidence of communism in all the orderly government of God. And nothing but a wicked abuse of

privileges ever makes them in any respect unnatural or oppressive. It is quite likely there are virtues of forbearance, on the one hand, and of benevolence, on the other, which are better secured now than under any different order of arrangement.

Here, then, is where we all meet on the broad plain of almighty purpose. My father, perhaps, laboriously acquired property. When dying, he bequeathed it to me. Your father, it may be, was in debt all his life. When he died, he left you only an inheritance of unpaid obligations, which (for mere family honour's sake) have kept you positively poor from the first moment you drew breath. Now why should I lift myself above you? I am no better, because my parents were wealthy, any more than I would be worse if I were struck by lightning. My education may be finer and higher. But yours would have been the same, if you could have afforded it. I am simply your equal in every respect in which I am a man; and you are mine. Neither of us was consulted as to the lot in which we should be born, or the result might have been different. God gives one person opulence; God gives another person poverty. There they meet in the arrangements of God.

2. In the second place, the rich and the poor meet together in the ordinary characteristics of their nature.

By this I mean, we are all human in our wants and our weaknesses, in our faults and our failings, in our whims and our frailties, in our ambitions, pains, pleasures, in our temptations, and our falls before them.

It is one of the most natural things in the world for each of us to love to puncture the swelling pride of mere assumption. There is a fierce bad feeling in the human heart that enjoys the spectacle much, when the foibles of people are put in caricature, or even in coarse exhibition. There is a vulgar applause always ready for that public speaker who has a will and a gift to show up the rich. It would be easy for me now to earn a cheap approval, if I were to indulge in a strain of cutting remark. For everywhere there are those whose hearts are bitter, as well as those whose tongues are sharp. I pander to no taste like

this. But it is needful to my purpose of good that I make you see plainly how the possession of mere wealth never lifts a man above, how the inconvenience of poverty never drops a man below, the great common humanity which holds us all. Our bodies, our minds, our homes, our sensibilities, are one and the same throughout.

1. The body has the same number of bones and muscles, nerves and sinews, in any of which disease may fasten and pain may centre. No matter what his fortune may be, any man's physical frame is independent of it. He may cringe with suffering, and cry out with aches. He may have an accident, and be mortified with a limp. He may be caught where, despite of his pride, he will shiver, or be hungry. Every one of us dwells in a house of clay. There may be resident within us a thousand infirmities, pestilences, and impurities. The rich and poor meet in this.

2. Nor is our exposure any the less in our minds. We have asylums for paupers, and retreats for millionaires. Oh, how sad it seems to think of the lights of reason gone out anywhere! But no adornment of an altar can avail to keep the flame burning on it. There are questions which none of us can answer. There are perplexities of doubt which no wealth can explain, no poverty can resolve. Rich men are sometimes as ignorant as poor men; and poor men are sometimes as obstinate as the rich. There is no height, up to which—there is no depth, down to which—anybody can go, and be rid for ever of malevolent passions, silly conceits, and sinful disorders.

4. Our sensibilities are also the same. In all our joys and sorrows we are alike. One day I saw a strong man at the door of a burial vault, where, within marble walls of surpassing splendour, he was laying all that remained to him of the wife of his youth. He shook like a leaf of the aspen which drooped over the railing beside him. His heart was surcharged with impetuous and over-mastering emotion. Another day I saw a similar sufferer, following on foot a coffin to the strangers' corner in the same cemetery, to lay his dead in a monumentless

grave. For aught I could discriminate, he shed the same sort of tears in the woeful abandonment of his grief, for his heart had lost likewise all there was to be the light of it. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." We are all constituted precisely the same in the tastes, affections, and sympathies, which make us glad or sad, and fill us with joy or mourning.

III.—We pass on to remark, in the third place, that the rich and poor meet together in their destinies in the common hereafter.

1. We all meet at the grave. One little plot of land there is to-day, somewhere on this planet, which waits to receive each of us in our appointed time within its narrow enclosure. Not a few of us have chosen it for ourselves. No man can help growing thoughtful as he looks upon the slight section of soil, that affecting oblong of earthly space, which before long is sure to become august and solemn as the depository of his dust kept in security for the resurrection. The tomb is the great leveller of the world. "There the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. There the prisoners hear the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there, and the servant is free from his master. Man dieth and wasteth away, and where is he? He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more."

2. Nor is this the last of it; we all meet at the judgment. The dead, small and great, are to stand before God. The great white throne is already set for them. It is a fixed fiction of ours, even in regard to human justice, that all parties are alike before the common law of the country. But the loopholes through which wealthy offenders are wont to slip unharmed, are lamentably many. And crime grows bold, and passion runs riotously, because of the hoped-for evasion. It may be a thorough novelty to some, and a mighty surprise to others; but the solemn announcement of the fact is made before all. "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil. So then every one of us must give account of himself unto God."

3. Of course, then, we all meet likewise in eternity. Somebody has lately said that this little period of human existence always seemed to him like the key-board of a piano; he did not know what came before the bass; nor, as he ran his fingers up, what came after the treble; he was most concerned by what he saw. There is force in the figure; and a half-truth in the statement. It does not make much matter what came before our birth. It does, however, seem greatly wise to inquire what sort of unseen immortality there is leading on beyond death. It only lies within our province now to say that no distinctions of wealth ever cross the line running between this world and the next. The soul then stands all alone, removed from every power or weakness it had here. It is treated simply as a soul. The awards of that unending future are very impartially to be made. The disclosure of God's glory, as his future residence, will come freely and fully to every believer, with no possible respect of persons. The sorrows of the lost will have no mitigation of their severity, neither to the poor because of his poverty, nor to the rich because of his wealth. In the careful adjustments of our destinies, such questions will be finally set at rest. "If the tree fall toward the south, or towards the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be."

IV.—It is needed to relieve the melancholy sadness of this picture, that we go on at once to remark, in the fourth place, that the rich and poor meet together in their rights under the gospel.

I use this word as referring only to the relations they sustain as man to man. No human being, be he rich or poor, has any such thing as rights before the bar of God. He who is a rebel, has forfeited everything which bears the name. He is an outlaw, and the wrath of God abideth upon him. But divine mercy has been pleased to say that there is forgiveness with God that he may be feared. Grace takes the place of justice. What we have no possible right to receive is proffered to us in wonderful favour.

In the distribution of this grace of pardon no man stands in

another's way. Our thought has at last reached its highest point. It bears now upon our hearts with more reach and relevancy than ever before. We may, perhaps, disregard the fact that God has made us all after one pattern in earthly things. But when it comes to the gospel, we must perforce pause to think. It will never do to pass by those who are our co-heirs in the kingdom. We may not offend the brother for whom Christ died. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Let us go over the details once more, for a new rehearsal.

1. *There is the same need in the fallen nature.* We are all one in our sins and pollutions; one in each of our soul-needs—forgiveness, paternal watchfulness, comforts, sympathies, instruction, guidance, entire redemption from guilty purposes and unholy lives. Just the same pride may be found in a poor man's disposition that is found in a rich man's. Sometimes both of them have idols. Sometimes the poor man curses, and sometimes the rich man swears. Sometimes the rich man swindles, and sometimes the poor man steals. Sometimes it is a pauper that is prayerless and godless, and sometimes it is the man who owns millions. And no matter what are the manifestations, the fact remains,—“All are gone astray, there is none that doeth good, no not one.”

2. *There is the same supply furnished in the inexhaustible mercy of a crucified Redeemer.* We are all one in his pity. We are all welcome at the cross. “Whosoever” and “whatsoever” are great words. Yet our Lord used them over and over again to assert the fulness and freeness of his atonement. “Whosoever will, let him come.” This is why one of the Apostles calls the gospel “the common salvation.” This is why Paul wrote to Philemon the master, concerning Onesimus the slave, “Receive him as a brother beloved.”

3. *There is the same clear condition annexed to the call.* One must want Christ. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.” He seems never to think of worldly position. All the fitness he requireth is to feel our need of him. Oh, I think the glory of the gospel lies in this! That withered old

beggar, down on the wharf, with no home but the street, no garments but the rags charity gives him, no food but the broken bits he has picked from the gutter, can hear the voice of Immanuel calling him to home, hope, and heaven, as plainly as blind Bartimeus at the gates of Jericho. If he simply hungers and thirsts for the gospel, he shall be filled. If he will hear the call, come to repentance and faith, Christ will save him.

4. *There is the same unalterable pledge annexed to the promise.* Christ never mentions how much a man owes or owns when he says, "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Some few intensifications of his language are remarkable. He says, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out." The gospel seems to contemplate men as mere bodiless souls. The garments they wear count for nothing. The consideration people bestow upon each other is alluded to in the Scriptures only as the reason for a warning. There is no royal road to salvation. The entire honour of the Godhead is put into the seal annexed to every proffer of divine grace to the rich and poor alike.

5. *There is the same fulness of fruition held out in answer to every hope at the last.* There is one, and only one heaven, for all the finally saved children of God. The institutions of the church are intended to show the real equality we all shall share in the Father's house with many mansions. I cannot see why we are all so slow in coming to this recognition. One of the most difficult words in the Lord's Prayer is the small pronoun with which it opens. We can easily say "Father," for that commits us to nothing. We can talk about the home, "Heaven," for that is too far away to be compromising. But to speak that little word "Our"—with all its width of revolutionary meaning, and so admit the brotherhood which equals us here, as surely as it will group us hereafter—this is most serious.

"The rich and poor meet together." From what has already been rehearsed before you, you cannot fail to see that



this does not mean that they confront each other, or attack each other. This is not a mere duel for money. The word *meet* does not mean encounter or fight. Nor does the text teach that rich and poor are all mixed up with each other; nor that they ought to associate more closely, or cherish more familiar intercourse. Nor does the verse assert that they are alike in gifts, or culture, or manners; nor that they meet in capacities, or in conditions, or even in responsibilities.

What the text does teach is this: that outside of all these particulars just enumerated, the rich and poor have one common ground on which they are equal. They share alike in the need of God's mercy, and in the supply of it. That is to say, the point of contact is religious, and is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. I choose to put the entire truth into one distinct proposition; namely, this:—

THERE IS NO PROPERTY QUALIFICATION WHATSOEVER FOR CITIZENSHIP IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

So I go on quietly to mention a few inferences that do not follow, and then a few that do.

It does not follow that all distinctions of providential condition are insignificant and trivial. Differences which God makes cannot be treated as matters of indifference. What God does, he expects to have noticed. If he bestows more wealth on one man than on another, either by parental bequeathal or personal industry, that man must recognise that he has been singled out for more work, and much wider extensiveness of responsibility. It is a weighty honour to be endowed with the power of being serviceable. "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."

Again: it does not follow that the rights of property are oppressive, and may be disregarded. Just the reverse of this is true. When God has given a man the use of wealth, all that God has given him is, so far as other men are concerned, entirely his own by every law of equity or justice.

Now, on the other hand, it does follow from the considerations we have urged, that in all providential arrangements of

human life, mutual forbearance, and moderation should be the rule of association.

Let the working-classes learn self-respect. Let them carefully discriminate between honest pride of feeling in their calling, and that hateful feeling of spite towards those who pay them for their work. One really can be quite dignified and manly, without putting anybody else down. Jesus of Nazareth chose his lot with the poor. I cannot help thinking he knew that rich people would go to a poor Saviour a great deal quicker than poor people would have gone to a rich one. Let your daily life show, by its candour of consideration, and by its industry of honest purpose, that you have a right to claim kinship with all whom the Redcemer loved and came to save.

Now to meet the poor in this, let the rich come more than half way. The old proverb had a subtle wisdom in it, when it said—“It is easy for one to go on foot, when he is leading his own horse by the bridle.” He could ride, you see! And when all immunities and all privileges are on one’s side, he can afford at times to vacate them for the sake of doing good. It is by no means fair to judge of men’s essentiality to the world, and sound the fathoms of their manhood by any line of mere counting-house accumulation. One may have great riches, and another may have none. “A man’s a man for a’ that!”

When we advance with these few simple principles in our right hand, into the sphere of Christian relations, and the practical associations of church membership, it ought to be no surprise to any of us to discover that they clear away many of our most perplexing difficulties. Surely, nowhere on the earth do men meet together as they do within the circle of Christ’s love. A true Christian congregation is a living body. That is the fine picture for us furnished in the gospel of grace. “Now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

## THE PRECIOUSNESS OF THE SOUL.

BY REV. JOSEPH CUMMINGS, D.D., LL.D.

*"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."—JAMES v. 19, 20.*

GOD alone converteth the soul. The Holy Spirit alone reneweth the heart. And yet, in this language of Scripture it is said, that "he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." We have no difficulty in understanding Scripture with reference to this subject, for God has plainly revealed the truth. While the Holy Spirit alone reneweth the heart of man, that work of the Holy Spirit is dependent on human will, and God has been pleased to honour human agency in its persuasive power over men. And so powerful is this influence in leading men to submit themselves to God, that he is pleased to speak of it as an agency that accomplishes the work.

It is said that "he which converteth the sinner shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." There cannot be any doubt as to whose sins are hidden by this work. Surely not the sins of the one who is engaged in securing *it*. Whatever we may do, however earnest our efforts for the

welfare of others, we can never by these labours save our own souls. Even if man had never sinned—if the leprous spot had never stained his brow, nor treason's banner been waved in his hand—even if he had kept his first estate of righteousness, his works would have no merit. How is it possible they should avail when so deeply is he stained with sin and so numerous are his crimes? And though we should give all our energies to the work of saving men—though in this labour no danger could fright us, no labours tire—though we were to labour with the utmost zeal through every moment of life, and yet not have personal faith, we should only be like those miserable men that built an ark of refuge for others, and when the storm came, and the heavens were opened, and the floods went surging by, their last despairing gaze rested on the ark of refuge which their own hands had built, but which gave no refuge to them.

It is said that "charity covereth a multitude of sins;" but we know well that not the sins of the man that exercises charity are the ones thus covered, but its broad mantle is thrown over the one toward whom the charity is exercised. So here, he that converteth the sinner hideth a multitude of sins that the converted sinner himself has committed.

We have already indicated the honour that God has placed on this work, in the very language that ascribes this great result to that human agency which co-operates with the Divine. We cannot but be struck with the contrast between what God honours and that which man deems most honourable. God honours those that save. Man too oft, indeed generally, gives his highest honour to the man that destroys. Let a man with greatest genius toil to accomplish some worthy object, some means of promoting human welfare, and oft his labour is regarded with little interest, and success receives but slight reward. But let a man devise some means of destruction, or improve those already known; let him devise some enginery whereby distant cities can be suddenly wrapped in flames, or thousands can be instantly slain, and the world's attention is aroused. A commission is appointed of the highest authority to

test his work, and highest reward and greatest recompense shall attend the results of his toil.

Thus the warrior has ever been a favourite with society ; and yet how terrible is his work ! In his course all prosperity disappears ; the verdure of the field gives place to a blackened waste ; the earth is strewn with ruin and covered with the dead. In the track of war are smouldering fires of thriving villages, and around the extinguished embers of once happy homes are groups of widows and orphans, perishing in want and despair. At the warrior's command thousands, frenzied with rage, are ushered into the presence of the Lord God of Sabaoth. Who can contemplate his work from a Christian point of view, and not regard it as a work that is terrible and to be deplored ? And yet for him have highest honours ever been decreed. The thunder of cannon announces his approach ; gorgeous processions go forth to meet him ; and nations devise new names and offices whereby they may signify their approval of his deeds.

Another man the world honours, less highly, though he is more worthy—the statesman of far-reaching genius, who devises those measures that shall increase general intelligence and happiness, advance the public interest, and make his country's name to be honoured and feared among the nations of the earth. This is nobler work, and more highly should it be esteemed. Society recognizes as worthy of some measure of esteem another character, more worthy than either we have named, yet less honoured. We refer to the man of benevolence, who goes forth to improve the condition of society, to raise the fallen, to give new hope to the despairing. Such a man was Howard, who sought to solve the problem, What is the greatest amount of effort a man may make in the cause of humanity ? Still higher in merit than the characters named is the man whom God especially honours. He toils, not only to improve man's physical, moral, and intellectual condition, but deems it his great work to save man from sin, from the pollution and corruption of his nature, from those consequences partially manifest in this life, *that shall have their consummation in the life to come.* He

goes forth with burning, self-sacrificing zeal, to save the souls of men.

How little does the world honour this class of men! How many chapters of general history are given to the record of such a life as Paul's? When has any nation ever decreed honours to such a man? In what public square has any monument ever been erected? And yet, when we consider the object sought, the motive that influences, and the work accomplished, what other character is so worthy of honour.

Now, the world is not altogether unjust in its appreciation of merit. While it does not honour the Christian hero—for religion is contrary to the policy of the world—it does esteem his characteristics, and demand that its heroes shall have, in reality or appearance, many of his essential qualities. It demands that they shall be unselfish, and moved by higher motives than mere self-seeking. Such is the nobleness inspired by the religion of Christ in this work of saving men, that you may select any branch of the Church so-called, whether correctly or otherwise—you may take of the Romish Church the Jesuits, the most noted for qualities not approved as Christian—and you will find in their record more heroism, more sacrifice, more real nobleness, than can be found in any branch of human effort, or any class of men outside of the Church of Christ. The Jesuit missionaries to the primitive inhabitants of our country were brave, devoted, heroic men, uninfluenced by the motives of the society that sent them forth; they were true, simple-hearted, earnest men, that laboured to save souls. "I go," said one of these men, "but I shall not return." They went among contending tribes, and as they believed that baptism was essential to salvation, they stood between contending hosts, exposed to the weapons of both parties, that they might give absolution and administer the rite of baptism to any dying warrior that would receive it at their hands. They entered the wigwams of the savages, and baptized their dying children in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; but, inasmuch as the ignorant savage connected the death of his child with the rite administered, he sheathed his knife in the missionary's heart. These missionaries, and those sent to other heathen, followed in the steps of their brethren that had fallen, and took their places, ready themselves to fall; for never did a missionary turn back in view of death from the work to which he was sent.

But the honour and greatness of this work of saving men is indicated by the greatness of the change wrought in conversion, through which all who have sinned must pass in

order to be saved. How wondrous the change in a soul converted! He was dead in trespasses and sins, lost in error, and in bondage to sin and Satan. Now, renewed in heart and life—changed in opinions, in prospects, in hopes, and associations—he is free, and becomes a child of God, a brother of Christ. How marked is this change, they who have experienced it well know, and they also understand it who have witnessed the wondrous transformation in character and conduct of many they have known as sinners and as converted men.

This change is not so slight as to be unnoticed in the intercourse of life. Those who have passed from death unto life will make manifest the important fact, and give assurance in opinions and life that they have been with Jesus.

As well might you affirm that the face of nature could be suddenly changed, this carpet of verdure spread about us give place to the snow and ice of winter, the singing of birds and the music of the rills cease, these trees stretch up their sapless, lifeless limbs in desolation to heaven, and yet no power has been exerted, no essential difference in circumstances or appearance is manifest, as to say there is no change when a soul is brought from the bondage of sin and Satan to union with God. As well might sudden darkness of midnight enshroud us, and you say there is no change. As well might a raving maniac become calm, and his restless eye look steadily and kindly on friends on whom before it gazed with fear and rage, and you say of him, as he is brought before you clothed and in his right mind, there is no change, as to say a soul that has been converted by the influence of the grace of God is the same as it was before.

Now the evidence of the reality of this work of conversion to any candid seeker of truth is clear and strong, and we would speak of this with confidence, because there are men who claim to be wise and learned that are ready to mock at the idea of any such a change in man's nature, and to demand the proof. In answer we might say, in the first place, that the doctrine is clearly and distinctly taught in God's word, and the experience of conversion is made the condition of admission to his kingdom. But we pass this, and appeal to the common sense of mankind, and ask opposers to use the same laws of evidence in judging of this subject they apply to other questions, and we ask nothing more. The evidence to the individual renewed is manifestly and necessarily, from its nature, in his own consciousness. This being the case, no one who

understands the laws of thought will expect an analysis of the evidence or proof of the fact attested from external or other sources. The evidence is simple, and cannot be defined. It can be understood and realized only by those who place themselves in the circumstances and conditions required and prescribed. As men decide with reference to other alleged facts of consciousness, so must they determine with reference to this. They may candidly comply with the conditions, and become personal witnesses of the reality of the work, or be able to say that the promised result is not experienced; or they may examine as to the integrity and intelligence of the witnesses and their worthiness of confidence. You may go to any community and bring forth the persons that say they have experienced this change of heart. They will tell you they have known what it is to be under the bondage of sin, in fear of the wrath to come, and that in their trouble and anguish of soul they submitted to the directions of God's word and yielded themselves to Christ. They will affirm that in so doing they found peace; their sense of condemnation was removed, and peace and joy filled their souls. They will tell you that they have the assurance of God's forgiveness, and the witness of the Holy Spirit that they are his children. This personal testimony will have confirmation in the change in their enjoyments, tastes, and the new rules of conduct to which they have submitted in consequence of conversion.

In the presence of this company of witnesses, embracing, as it does, many of the most intelligent, most worthy and highly trusted in every community, he will be a bold man that shall affirm that they either intend to deceive, or know not what they affirm; that they are either knaves or fools, that they are so simple as to be unable to tell what they have experienced, or are trying to impose a falsehood on their neighbours and the world. Such is the nature of the evidence, it is impossible that a man of but ordinary intelligence can fail to understand it. He must know his own emotions as to their nature and character. The evidence of the fact, and the nature of conversion, will be much stronger if we consider the great variety of circumstances under which it is experienced. We may call our witnesses from the regions of perpetual ice, from torrid sands, from cannibal islands, from heathen lands at the distant ends of the earth. They shall have no opportunity of conferring with each other, or exchanging opinions; but shall be called each to state in all the languages of the babbling earth, the story of conversion and salvation. As these narrations, *whether coming from the cultivated or uncultivated, the sons of*



highest genius or those of lowest intellectual endowments, the representatives of highest civilisation or lowest heathenism, shall be interpreted, there shall be found an absolute unity of experience, and an agrément in all essential points. How can any candid man, reasoning on this subject as men reason on other subjects, deny the great evangelical doctrine of a change of heart, of salvation by faith?

To those who believe human testimony, we bring forth our array of witnesses, whose intelligence, integrity, and veracity no man may or can question, and ask that their testimony be received on points on which they are fully competent to speak.

Many a proud sceptic who denies the great fundamental doctrines of Christian experience, shows himself to be among the most credulous of men. He boasts of his wisdom, and his reliance on reasoning, and declares he cannot believe in miracles; yet he is prepared to believe in a miracle more stupendous far than any alleged in Christian history. He is ready to believe that the great company of believers who have professed saving faith in Christ in ages past and in the present time, have combined together to deceive; they have contrived forms to be used in all languages to express certain emotions, states of feeling, and facts of personal experience that have no reality or foundation. He is ready to believe that these witnesses, of all ages and conditions, and circumstances in life, have tenaciously clung to these falsehoods in all the trials, losses, sufferings, and persecutions to which they have been subjected; and when dying as martyrs a cruel death, have used their last breath to recommend it to others. Such an allegation no man does or can believe.

But the greatness of the work of saving men is manifested in the results that follow it. On these we cannot dwell; but who can estimate them in the case of a single soul saved from death? Take anyone—select the humblest person, the one that has least of power, seemingly the least favoured of God in the bestowment of his gifts—and that soul, in the long ages of eternity opening before it, shall know, as the result of conversion, more joy in its ceaseless being than has been known in earth and heaven since the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy. But who can tell, on the other hand, what degradation and misery shall result if any soul is lost?

But in this work of saving men the most important point remains for consideration. On whom rests the responsibility of *this* work of converting men? For we delight to dwell on the words—“Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner  
 “*save a soul from death.*” How honourable is it to human

effort, weak as it is, to speak of it thus. With respect to the responsibility, the Church has been too much inclined, as we think, to place it almost exclusively on the ministry. Great is their responsibility; and we would not lessen it. Woe be to that man who taketh upon him this ministry and does not labour for the conversion of men!—a watchman on the walls of Zion who sounds no alarm! Woe be that man on earth! Woe to him in the Judgment Day! Fearful is his responsibility, and solemn is the office that God has committed to him. We shall not be understood to undervalue them, or to lessen whatever is implied in his duty to preach the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But we do affirm a responsibility, in proportion to the ability and opportunity they have, rests upon every individual member of the Church; and if they are not directly engaged in seeking to secure the conversion of men, they are sinning against God. It is not enough to wish for this work, to feebly pray for it, to think of the obligation of the Church at large, but every single Christian must labour as he has opportunity, and use all his means of influence, to secure the salvation of others.

The great object of the Church, and of union with it, is not the personal happiness of believers. However desirable may be happiness, which many regard as our being's end and aim, it is not only unchristian, but unreasonable, to regard it, whether in religion or elsewhere, as a direct object of pursuit. Vain and absurd is it to try to be happy. Happiness is the result of obedience to laws, and misery is the consequence of disobedience. We shall be happy ourselves when we strive in self-forgetfulness to make others happy. While the Church is designed to furnish instruction, assistance, and comfort to its members, it is God's great instrumentality for the diffusion of the word of life, for proclaiming the gospel unto unregenerate men. God has made nothing in vain, nothing to be idle. He made the rills to flow, the lightnings to play, the flowers to bloom, the stars to shine. In the glorious firmament of the heavens we see stars of the first magnitude shining in their brilliancy, but we know there are myriads of stars which the human eye cannot singly discern. Yet every one of these stars, however feeble may be its light, adds, in some degree, to the brilliancy of that firmament. If any one star were extinguished the brightness would be diminished. So there are diversities of gifts and powers in the Church, but its efficiency is greater or less as they are all faithfully employed or neglected. It is sinful and absurd for anyone to say, "I have not the power to do anything; I cannot speak to anyone on the subject of religion." What other subject is there on which

men cannot speak? Will any man acknowledge himself so feeble and humble that he can never speak on business, so modest that he can never say a word on trade? Will any man admit that he surrenders his opinions to others because he is so feeble-minded that he cannot resist? Is there any man that has in the politics of the community in which he lives no opinions or influence? There may be in every community one Christian who is excusable for neglecting Christian effort—the one who has so little intellectual and moral power that there is no other soul he can influence. Our excuse that we have not the requisite power to engage in this work is a dishonour to ourselves, and in urging it we dishonour God. When men thus speak, they talk vainly. They can speak of other things. They know the value of lands, of ships, and stocks; but they do not know the value of the human soul. They know the danger of losing property, of contracting disease; but they do not know, and will not consider, the danger of eternal death. How many Christians there are whose neighbours speak of them with reproach? My friends, we ought to be honest with each other. We remember, before we assumed the Christian name, when our consciences were troubled, how carefully we watched the lives of Christians; when, in the daily intercourse of life, they never urged on our attention the importance of religion, and the great peril of neglect, how vain did we regard their earnestness and sincerity in their profession. The criticisms we made on others are now made on us by those that distrust our profession and condemn our lethargy. We believe men are perishing, and that we are co-workers with God, his instrumentality to save them; yet we do nothing. Perhaps we have never sought by direct effort to bring one soul to Christ. We are persuaded there is a perfect indifference on the part of individual Church-members to their obligation to work for God. It is on this account the Church languishes and souls perish. In conversion the human will must yield in order that the Holy Spirit may renew the heart and forgive sins. To secure this yielding of the will of the sinner to Divine grace, family, friendly, and moral influences may avail. God requires that they be sanctified to this use. God cannot do in this assembly to-day what he would accomplish if the Church were faithful. We need not to pray to God to be willing to save men, but to persuade men to be willing to be saved. Christ is waiting to be *gracious*, ready to save now all that will come to him. It is an *important and solemn truth* that at this and every moment, God

does absolutely all that is possible to save every soul here and elsewhere. He does all that infinite wisdom can suggest, infinite love can prompt, infinite power can perform, to save every sinful soul. The arm of the Lord is straitened, and Divine efficiency lessened, by the neglect of the Church. We admit the importance of multiplying Bibles and placing them in the hands of men; but Bibles are not printed and circulated by a miracle. It is the duty of the Church to do this work. The Holy Spirit is more powerful in its influence on a soul that knows the truth; so, also, its influence is increased when kindly, earnest influences enforce the truth; when the voice of affection trembles in solicitude, and earnest entreaty to friends to yield to Christ. There has prevailed an opinion injurious to the power of the Church, that there are set times and seasons for the salvation of men; and it has been deemed necessary to patiently wait for God to manifest his pleasure to save and pour out the Holy Spirit. The set time for any soul to be saved is, when that soul is willing to submit and be saved. The set time for the Church to have an outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a revival is, when the Church is willing to consecrate itself, and co-operate with God in his work.

The pulpit of to-day, on special occasions like this, is too much disposed to discuss subjects only remotely connected with practical religion. With such a course I have no patience, but only weariness and disgust. We should urge the great doctrines of the cross, God's plan of saving men. Suppose that the simple, fundamental truths of the Gospel were not only publicly proclaimed but privately; in kindness and earnestness continually urged on the attention of those about us, who can anticipate the result? Shall we not covenant before God simply and earnestly to strive to convert men and save souls from death?

Have not some of us sad thoughts as we think of those with whom we have been associated, and of our unfaithfulness? Do not scenes rise before us that cause sorrow and anguish? Has not one of our friends or families passed away relative to whose future there is a terrible doubt, nay, perhaps a fearful certainty, if we could entertain the thought?

A mother wept for the death of a beloved child. Friends came to comfort her. They offered the usual sources of consolation, such as affectionate hearts yearn to give. But the mother rejected it all. "Ah!" said she, "it is not this. It is not this. I could give up my child. I could bow with resignation over her death. But, alas! I fear she is not saved." *It was a*

foolish diffidence that kept me from talking with her as I oft felt it my duty to do. And when she was stricken with disease, I thought the opportunity would come and I would then improve it. But, alas! delirium came. I bowed by my child. I prayed God, not so much for her life as for one hour of reason, that I might do my duty to my child. But she never recognised me, and I fear she is lost." O! mothers, mothers, do you love your children, and are you living with them in view of certain death; and have you done your duty to seek the conversion of their souls?

But there is joy, also, in the thought of being instrumental in saving souls. A missionary sat by the dying bed of his first convert. The dying man said to him, "Brother, I hear you preached a sermon about heaven least evening; I could not go to hear you preach, but I am going to heaven itself, and when I get there I shall go first to the Lord Jesus Christ and thank him that he ever sent you to tell me of his love; and then, brother, I shall come back to the gate and sit there until you come; and when you come, I will lead you to the Saviour and say, 'Here, Lord, is the man that told me of thy love.'" O! Christians, are you willing to walk the streets of heaven and have no one greet you there? Would you be willing to go yourselves inside the gates and never have a soul to greet you and say, "I thank God for the kind words of sympathy and love you spoke on earth?"

But while this work of saving souls thus concerns the Church, shall the unconverted be indifferent to their own salvation? Remember, if Christians are unfaithful you are not excused. You know your duty, and, living amid so many privileges, your guilt for the rejection of Christ will be the greater. "Amid Sabbaths, and Bibles, and Churches, and the intercession of saints, you are going on to death." What more can be done for you? God beseeches you with tenderness and terror. Jesus stretches out to you his hands as he tells you he died to save you. The Holy Spirit intercedes, and with earnestness constrains. The Church is praying for you, and friends are weeping in view of your danger. Heaven is interested in your behalf, and angels are ready to sing songs of joy over your salvation. Hell sends up its smoke of torment to deter you from its gates. Shall all these means of instruction, of entreaty, and warning be wasted? Through all these will you urge your way to death?

"Bowels of mercy—length, breadth, height and depth of Jesus' love—save, O! save you ere you perish for ever!"





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